THE LIFE AND TIMES OF NOOR JAHAN

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1967

THE CARAVAN BOOK HOUSE
KUTCHERY ROAD, LAHORE

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY CH. ABDUL HAMID, M. A.,
AT THE CARAVAN PRESS, INSIDE MELA RAM MILLS,
MELA RAM ROAD, LAHORE.

PREFACE

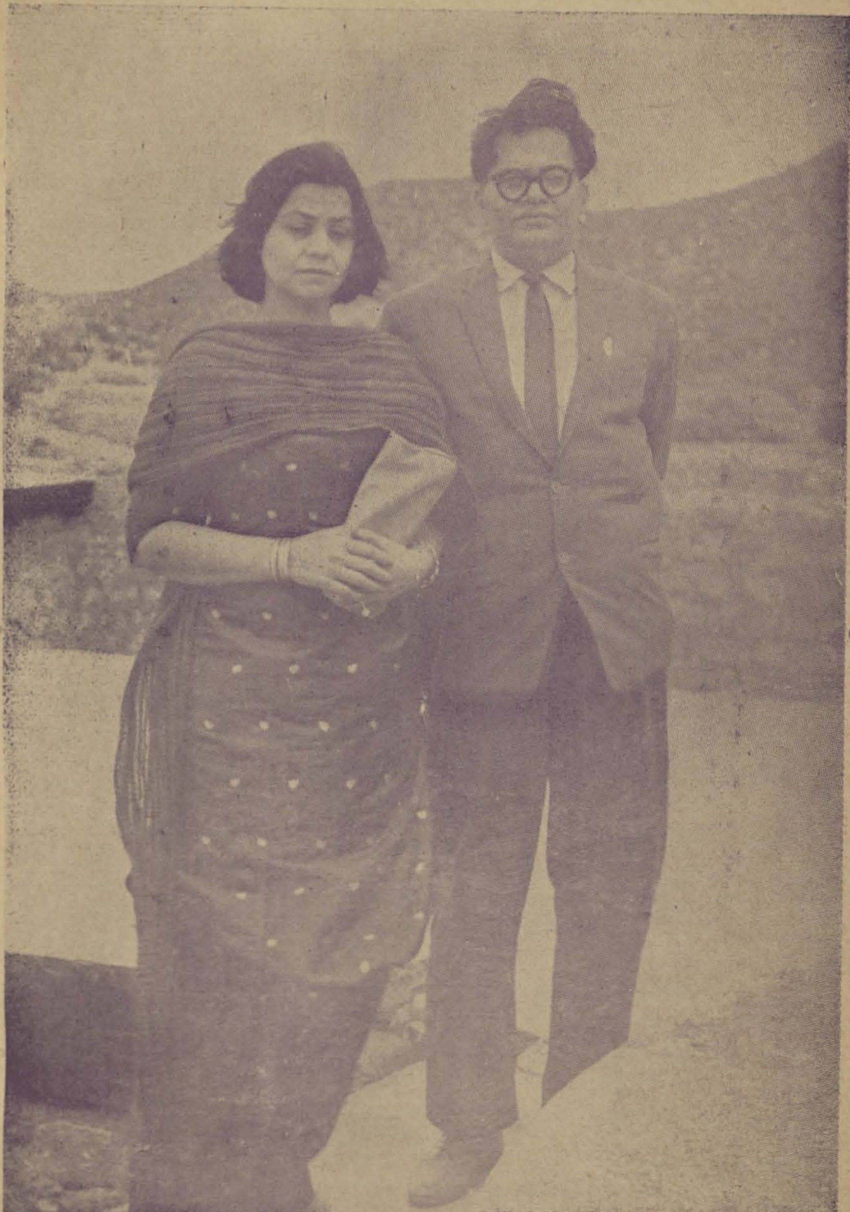
We have prepared this book on the life and times of Noor Jahan mainly on the basis of the contemporary chronicles. Besides them we have tried to tap all the available material on the subject. The contemporary European works and the writings of the later historians have also been fully consulted and analysed.

The personality of Noor Jahan has been shrouded in the mist of legends and romantic tales. Although they have found place in sober histories, yet they are the result of the speculations of the human mind. It is unfortunate that such speculations started within half a century of her death. We have tried to sift out the historical personality of Noor Jahan out of the heap of such historically unsound tales and present the personality of the Empress in its true perspective.

We are thankful to the librarians of the Panjab University Library, the Archaeological Department Library, the Dyal Sing College Library and the Dyal Sing Public Library. These gentlemen provided all the printed books and the manuscripts, etc , that were needed for the compilation of this work.

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5-1-65

CONTENTS



The Authors

Chapter 1

THE FAMILY OF NOOR JAHAN

The family, which produced the illustrious lady Noor Jahan, was of Iranian origin. Tehran was their native town. Khwaja Muhammad Sharif, the grandfather of Noor Jahan, was the vizier of Muhammad Khan Taklu, the Governor of Khurasan, a province of Iran. After Taklu's death Shah Tehmasp Safavi made him his own minister. The Khwaja died in A.D. 1575.[1]

Khwaja Sharif was a man of scholarly taste. The *Maathir* gives his *Takhallus* (تخلص), i.e. *nom de plume*, as Hijri. He had two brothers, Khwaja Mirza Ahmad and Khwajgi Khwaja. Mirza Ahmad was the father of Mirza Amin, the well-known writer and author of *Haft Iqlim* (هفت اقلیم). He was also a talented person of poetic taste. Shah Tehmasp is said to have remarked out of affection for him:

میرزا احمد طہرانی، ما ثالث خسرو و خاقانی ما

Khwajgi Khwaja also had a taste for poetry. The same was the case with his son Khwaja Shahpur.

Mirza Ghiath Beg. Khwaja Muhmmad Sharif had two sons. Muhammad Tahir, the elder, was a scholarly man, who had developed himself as a poet with *Wasli* (وصلی) as his *nom de plume.* Mirza Ghiath-ud-Din Muhammad, better known as Mirza Ghiath, was the second son. He also was a man of letters. He was married to Asmat Begum, the daughter of Mirza Ala-ud-Daula Aga Mulla.

Ghiath Beg's Migration to India. After the death of Khwaja Sharif, Mirza Ghiath Beg is said to have suffered a reverse of fate. In utter destitution he decided to migrate to India, where in Akbar's Court talented persons from Iran and Central Asia received very friendly treatment. His wife, two sons and one daughter accompanied him to India. *En route* the meagre belongings which

1. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 54 (E. & D., Vol. VI, p. 403); Sujan Rai, p. 447 (Rai also reports that Muhammad Khan Taklu acted as host to Humayun, when he visited Herat on his way to Iran; Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 263; *Ahwal-i-Asaf Khanan*' f. 2b; *Maathir*, Vol. I, pp. 127-8.

he took with him were plundered, so much so that he was left with only two mules, which the five members of his family rode by turns.

The Birth of Noor Jahan. Trekking in this way they reached Qandhar in A.D. 1577, where his wife gave birth to a daughter in that state of utter destitution and poverty. The baby was named Mehr-un-Nisa. The family had nothing to provide for the newly-born baby and her mother. Their sad plight attracted the notice of a kind-hearted merchant, Malik Masud, who was also the chief of the caravan. He found Ghiath Beg in the throes of misfortune needing every possible help. The afflicted family got an affectionate protector in Malik Masud. Soon a friendship developed between them. The caravan wound its way to Mughal India with the family of Mirza Ghiath Beg, who were now comparatively in a better condition. The birth of the daughter augured well for the family.

The Legend of Noor Jahan's Abandonment. Khawafi Khan,[2] who compiled his history about a century after the period of Jahangir and Noor Jahan, is perhaps the first writer to narrate the legend of Mehr-un-Nisa's (Noor Jahan's) abandonment on the roadside by her parents due to utter destitution and their inability to carry her along with them. She was picked up, we are told, by Malik Masud, who was so much struck by the charm of the baby that he resolved to nourish her. He searched for a nurse in the caravan and found one in the person of the baby's own mother, who thanked God on this opportunity to nurse her forsaken daughter.

This story is not told by any contemporary chronicler. It is apparent that within a century after the Empress many a romantic and thrilling legend evolved round her personality.

Alexander Dow[3] is the first among English writers to give this story. He gives it a pathetic colouring. He says, "The infant, covered with leaves, was placed under a tree; and the disconsolate parents proceeded in tears." They had hardly advanced about a mile from the place when the afflicted mother gave way to grief. She threw herself from the horse on the ground and wept for her forsaken daughter. Mirza Ghiath was also moved by her wailing and weeping and returned to fetch the baby. No sooner did his eyes fall on the child than he was extremely horrified. A black snake was coiled around her. When the father rushed forward, the serpent left the baby and creeped into the hollow of the tree. He took the

2. Khawafi, Vol. I, p. 264.
3. *History of Hindustan*, Vol. III, pp. 22-3.

baby to her mother. Meanwhile some travellers appeared and soon relieved them of their wants. Dow appears to have got this version from two of his authorities, namely, *Mirat-ul-Waridat* (written by Muhammad Shuffia of Delhi in the reign of Muhammad Shah) and *Mirat-ul-Ulum*. He mentions these books among his sources.

Among the English historians of the nineteenth century Elphinstone[4] gives the legend of Noor Jahan's abandonment by the roadside. She lay there all the night and was picked up by the chief merchant in the morning who was astonished to see such a beautiful baby lying deserted on the dust. Apparently his source is Khawafi Khan. From Elphinstone this story found its way in all the text-books and general history books compiled during the British period.

As already pointed out, the contemporary chroniclers are silent about this story. Noor Jahan's unprecedented rise to power and her later fame and renown led the imaginative mind of the common folk to fabricate such stories.

Mirza Ghiath in the Royal Court. Malik Masud brought Mirza Ghiath to Fatehpur Sikri and introduced him to the Emperor. Akbar was a great judge of men. He could easily recognise the talents and worth of a person.

Mirza Ghiath was a man of ability and learning. He knew how to draft letters according to the peculiar formalities prevalent in medieval Central Asia. He was a brilliant conversationalist and possessed all the virtues that were essential for a courtier of an Oriental ruler. The birth of the daughter became a blessing for him and his introduction to Malik Masud proved a stepping stone for future progress.

In Akbar's court Mirza Ghiath rose steadily in rank and influence. Soon he held the mansab of three hundred. In 1595 he was granted the important office of the Dewan of Kabul. Gradually he rose to the mansab of one thousand and the important office of the Dewani[5] of the Royal Household was bestowed upon him.

4. *Elphinstone's History* (Ed. by Cowell), p. 554; cf. also Urdu translation, pp. 922-3.

5. *Maathir*, Vol. I, p. 129.

Chapter 2

THE LOVE STORY

Noor Jahan is a unique figure in Indo-Muslim history. Her personality is shrouded in a romantic mist of mysterious stories. In this respect no other historical figure can be compared with her. The reason is evident. The widow of a rebel official, after his murder, enters the royal household, and so fascinates the mind of the Emperor that she practically rules the Empire for about sixteen years as the most powerful personality. This leads the popular mind to weave a fabric of myth and fable around her. Her later grandeur and greatness especially led the Indian mind to concoct thrilling stories about her early life.

As we have discussed elsewhere, in the later years of Noor Jahan's ascendancy bitter enmity and rivalry developed between her and her step-son, Shah Jahan, the heir apparent. Hostility towards the Queen on the part of the historians of Shah Jahan was the natural result. They either do not mention Noor Jahan or they write adversely about her. This tradition gradually became more and more deep-rooted.

Sujan Rai's Remarks. In this connection an analysis of the attitude of Sujan Rai Batalvi, a historian of Aurangzeb's reign, will illustrate the point. He compiled *Khulasat-ul-Tawarikh* in the fortieth year of Aurangzeb's reign in 1107 A.H. (A.D. 1695-6), only half a century after the death of the Empress.

Sujan Rai's book became very popular on account of its good qualities; whatever he wrote became commonly circulated. After describing the murder of Sher Afgan, the marriage of Mehr-un-Nisa with Jahangir and the immense love that evolved between them later on, he remarks[1]:

"در این صورت عجب نیست که شیر افگن بموجب امر والا بقتل رسیده باشد۔"

1. *Khulasat-ul-Tawarikh* (text, p. 44): "Under these circumstances, it is not strange that Sher Afgan might have been killed at the Imperial instance."

The doubt expressed by him was made into a positive statement. Sujan Rai is pro-Shah Jahan and anti-Noor Jahan in his generalisations, although he compiled his book about sixty-eight years after the death of Jahangir. It shows that an anti-Noor Jahan bias had developed during this period. At the same time the weaving of the romances around her personality was also in progress even in the reign of Aurangzeb who was himself anti-Shah Jahan. While discussing the rebellion of Shah Jahan against his father, Jahangir, Sujan Rai's remarks about Noor Jahan are quite indecent.[2] Another very interesting thing to note in Sujan Rai's book is that, while describing the places worth seeing in Lahore, he mentions Shahdara monuments. He describes the mausoleum of Jahangir and that of Asaf Khan, but ignores the tomb of Noor Jahan which was of equal grandeur at that time, and even now one cannot afford to omit its account.

Khawafi Khan's Narrative. Muhammad Hashim Khawafi Khan compiled his book *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* in 1130 A.H. (A.D. 1718). By that time a regular romance appears to have evolved.

According to Khawafi Khan,[3] Jahangir had been attracted towards Noor Jahan since her early youth. Whenever she visited the royal palace along with her mother, Jahangir would pursue her. Once he found her all alone in a secluded corner. He caught hold of her, pulled her towards him in a tight embrace. The young girl was

2. Ibid., p. 470:

از فتنه سازئ کوته اندیشان و اغوائے نور جهان بیگم شورش فتنه
و فساد بلند شد - و چنان فرزند اقبال پیوند را که غیر از اطاعت و فرمان
پذیری امری دیگری نداشت بزور و عنف در کبر سن وضعف و بیماری
بے موجب برسر ستیزه آوردند - مثنوی

عزیزان را کند کید زنان خوار ز کید زن بود دانا گرفتار
ز مکر زن کسے عاجز مبادا زن کیاد خود هرگز مبادا

3 *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. I, pp. 265-7. Khawafi Khan acknowledges to have taken the account of Noor Jahan from *Minhaj-us-Sadiqin* by Muhammad Sadiq Tabrizi, an employee of Prince Shuja. The book was compiled in the reign of Shah Jahan. It means that the germs of the romance, as it is described now, had begun to sprout as early as the reign of Shah Jahan, either due to anti-Noor Jahan bias of the age or the extreme attachment between the two led the people to speculate in this way.

extremely taken aback. She freed herself with great difficulty and made a complaint against the prince to the Queen mother. When Akbar heard of it, he advised Mirza Ghiath Beg to marry his daughter immediately. The Emperor himself provided a bridegroom in the person of Ali Quli Khan Istajlu. Immediately after marriage he was granted a Jagir in Bengal and was despatched there. When Jahangir ascended the throne, he appointed Qutub-ud-Din Khan Kokaltash as the Governor of Bengal with secret instructions against Ali Quli Khan Sher Afgan. According to Khawafi Khan, the very appointment of Qutub-ud-Din roused suspicions in the mind of Sher Afgan. He inferred that the fire of love for his wife Mehr-un-Nisa still kindled in the heart of the new Emperor. As a result, the course of action selected by him was hostility and rebellion. He was invited to attend the provincial Court but he declined the invitation. At last Qutub-ud-Din himself visited his Jagir. Sher Afgan armed himself and went forth to see the Governor in a small company. The conversation developed into a clash and as a result Qutub-ud-Din was mortally wounded. The members of the Governor's retinue attacked Sher Afgan and inflicted severe injuries on him. With bleeding wounds he rushed on horseback to his house. He intended to kill Mehr-un-Nisa before his own death in order to deprive the Emperor of his nefarious ambition. The mother-in-law of Sher Afgan, who is said to have been present there, realised the whole situation from the wounded visage of the brave warrior. The only course left to her at that critical juncture was to start wailing and weeping. She told Sher Afgan that Mehr-un-Nisa had thrown herself in a well on hearing the news of the tragic happening. She advised him to go and get his wounds dressed immediately. But Sher Afgan was completely exhausted. He collapsed and fell on the ground never to rise again. Mehr-un-Nisa was sent to the royal seraglio.

Let us examine this story, which looks like a tale from the *Arabian Nights*. The story of Jahangir's early contacts with Noor Jahan in the lifetime of his father is not given by any contemporary chronicler or even the later writers of Shah Jahan or Aurangzeb's reign.

It is an historical fact that Sher Afgan was not granted any Jagir in Bengal by Akbar immediately after his marriage with Mehr-un-Nisa. He was detailed with Prince Salim (Jahangir) on a military

expedition against the Rana of Udaipur.[4] He sided with Salim for some time during his rebellion. Had this story of Salim's contact with Mehr-un-Nisa been correct, Akbar would never have sent Sher Afgan on a military expedition under Salim, especially when we judge the character and general behaviour of Salim before his accession to the throne. This very fact questions the authenticity of this story. All the contemporary[5] and many of the later writers agree that Sher Afgan was cut into pieces immediately after Qutub-ud-Din was mortally wounded. Khawafi Khan sends him to his house to kill his wife simply to take the romantic story to its climax. All the more interesting is the presence of Noor Jahan's mother at the scene. At the time when her son, Mirza Sharif,[6] and husband, Mirza Ghiath, were in trouble due to their pro-Khusrau activities, how could she be at Bardwan? This story may form a very good theme for a novel or a drama, but it has nothing to do with sober history.

It appears that the story given by Muhammad Hashim Khawafi Khan was further developed by later writers including the Europeans. Dow[7] has related this story with all the colour and vivacity of a dramatic plot.

Elphinstone's *History of India*[8] compiled about a century back gives a romantic version of the story, based mainly on Khawafi Khan.

As Elphinstone's book formed one of the most popular basic works on Indian history, the Noor Jahan romance became very popular. It found its way in the general text-books.

In 1891, S.M. Latif published his *History of the Punjab*. He has given the version of Noor Jahan's biography that had become quite

4. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 23, 55:

"در آخر بخدمت جهانگیر بادشاه بخطاب شیر افگن و منصب مناسب ترقی و تصاعد نمود - و بعد از جلوس اشرف در صوبهٔ بنگال جاگیر عنایت نموده بدالصوب رخصت فرمودند -"

Cf. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 113-4; *Maathir* (see article on Sher Afgan), Vol. II, pp. 622-4; Gladwin, p. 40.

5. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 23; *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 113-5; Gladwim, p. 40. *Maathir* also remarks that the story of Sher Afgan's return to his house for killing his wife after having been injured is not supported by *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangir*, meaning that it should be accepted cautiously (Vol. II, pp. 623-4).

6. De Laet, p. 178.

7. Alexander Dow, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 24-36.

8. Urdu translation, pp. 922-6.

popular by that time.[9] It is strange that every new version is a modification upon the older one in one way or the other. S.M. Latif in his *History of Lahore* and *History of Agra*[10] has given similar versions.

Besides historians writing in English, the chroniclers using Indo-Pakistani languages as the media of expression have given fantastic stories about our Imperial couple. Most important among the Urdu writers is Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad (d. 1910), the well-known Urdu prose stylist and critic. In *Darbar-i-Akbari*, while describing the Meena Bazar, he says[11]:

ایک دفعہ جہانگیر بازار میں پھرتا ہوا چمن میں آ نکلا۔ ہاتھ میں
کبوتر کا جوڑا، دونوں ہاتھ رکے ہوئے، ایک پھول توڑنا چاہتا تھا
وہیں رک گیا۔ سامنے سے ایک لڑکی آئی۔شہزادہ نے کہا بوا! ذرا ہمارے
کبوتر تم لے لو ہم وہ پھول توڑ لیں۔ لڑکی نے دونوں کبوتر لے لئے۔
شہزادہ نے کیاری میں جا کر چند پھول توڑ لئے۔ پھر کر آیا تو دیکھا
کہ لڑکی کے ہاتھ میں ایک کبوتر ہے۔ پوچھا دوسرا کبوتر کیا ہوا؟
عرض کی صاحب عالم! وہ تو اڑ گیا۔ پوچھا ہیں؟ کیونکر اڑ گیا؟
اس نے ہاتھ بڑھا کر دوسری مٹھی بھی کھول دی کہ حضور یوں
اڑ گیا۔ اگرچہ دوسرا کبوتر بھی ہاتھ سے گیا مگر شہزادہ کا دل
اس انداز پر لوٹ گیا۔ پوچھا تمہارا کیا نام ہے؟ عرض کی مہرالنسا۔
پوچھا تمہارے باپ کا کیا نام ہے؟ عرض کی مرزا غیاث۔

Once Jahangir, in the prime of his youth, strolled into a garden, after moving through the Meena Bazar. He had a pair of pigeons in his hands. He wanted to pluck a flower, but his hands were not free. By chance a young lass happened to pass by that way. After handing over his pigeons to her, he plucked the flower. On returning to the lass he found that she had only one pigeon in her hand. He asked about the other. She retorted, "Your Highness! it has fluttered away." "How has it happened?" the astonished prince asked. She stretched her hand, weakened the grip and let the other bird also fly away and said, "Sir, it disappeared like this." This innocent and spontaneous reply affected the prince very much. He not only lost his rare pigeons but his heart also. The prince inquired

9. S.M. Latif, *History of the Punjab*, p. 156.
10. *History of Lahore*, pp. 110-2; *History of Agra*, pp. 28-9.
11. *Darbar-i-Akbari* (Urdu), pp. 187-8.

about her name and parentage and asked her to visit the royal palace off and on along with her mother. After this Mehr-un-Nisa started coming to the palace regularly. The prince always shadowed her wherever she went. Soon the secret was out. The Emperor ordered Mirza Ghiath to arrange the marriage of his daughter immediately with Ali Quli (called Tehmasp Quli by Azad). This marriage led to his death. After some time his widow Mehr-un-Nisa came to the royal palace and became Noor Jahan Begum. "Alas ! neither Jahangir is left nor Noor Jahan, but the blots on their names have become everlasting."

Azad has reproduced the same story in his typically rhetorical style in his another book *Qasas-i-Hind* (The Stories of India), Part II. This book remained in the curricula of the Indian schools for primary and middle classes for more than half a century. This made the pigeon story very popular. It impressed upon the young minds that Jahangir secured the hand of Noor Jahan after doing away with her husband, and that Noor Jahan married the murderer of her husband. Azad mentions the source of this story as "کہن سال بزرگوں سے سنا ہے" [I have heard it from the seniors of advanced age]. It is a pity that Azad gives a story on this flimsy authority and I have found no contemporary or later writer collaborating him.

This story has found its way in most of the text-books of history and Urdu literature, and it appears very difficult to convince our common folk about its falsehood.

Among the followers of Azad in this respect we may mention Abdul Latif Siddiqi[12] who after describing this story holds Noor Jahan responsible for two murders (those of Sher Afgan and Qutub-ud-Din).

In 1940 Mirza Ihtizaz-ud-Din Khan, a member of the ruling family of Loharu State of British India, wrote a biography of Noor Jahan. He has also given the pigeon story[13] along with other prevalent fantastic tales, making it a very interesting romance.

This tendency has resulted in the fact that many Urdu writers have used this story as a theme for novels and dramas.[14]

12. See *Sawanih-Umri Noor Jahan Begum* (Urdu), pp. 9, 13.

13. *Noor Jahan* (Urdu), pp. 16-7.

14. In this connection Urdu novels *Mehr-un-Nisa Begum* by Munshi Ahmad Husain Khan and *Ishq-i-Jahangir* by Khwaja Muhammad Shafi may be mentioned.

Nawab Imad Nawaz Jung[15] of Hyderabad Deccan compiled a biography of Noor Jahan. Like Muhammad Husain Azad he describes the pigeon incident and the romantic meetings of Prince Salim and Mehr-un-Nisa. Like Azad he ascribes ulterior motives to Prince Salim when he orders Ali Quli Khan, after his marriage with Mehr-un-Nisa, to have a fight with a wild elephant or a ferocious lion, at the time when Ali Quli was a member of his retinue. As usual, Sher Afgan is described to have been murdered for having been the husband of Mehr-un-Nisa, who is dubbed as an instrument for the dual murder of Qutub-ud-Din Khan and Sher Afgan. He also tries to give an epic hue to the incident by sending Sher Afgan back to his house after his fatal injuries to kill his wife. Mehr-un-Nisa is described to have been saved by the clever trick of her mother. These details no doubt give to the story a touch of Oriental romances, but it has nothing to do with sober history.

Among Urdu writers Mirza Hairat has been very critical in discussing the events of Noor Jahan's life. He questions the truth of secret amorous meetings of the prince and Mehr-un-Nisa. Mirza Hairat refers to the outspoken nature of Jahangir and is of opinion that he would never have concealed his love affair, had it been true. Mirza Hairat is perhaps the only Urdu chronicler of the British period who stresses upon reliance on the contemporary sources.

Besides this he advances very impressive arguments to refute the fantastic tales. According to one version, Salim himself asked his parents to marry him to Mehr-un-Nisa. Mirza Hairat regards it most improbable for a Mughal prince to talk in this manner to his parents.

Our writer argues that such a marriage was against neither the law of the land nor against religion. Akbar was a broadminded ruler; he would have naturally allowed it.

Mirza Hairat concludes this discussion with the remark that the Mughal palace was not a bawdy-house. Akbar's palace was inhabited by Mughal and Rajput princesses of sublime character. The Court ceremonies were attended by the ladies of noble families. And such a love affair with all such details[16] could the least have been tolerated.

Mirza Hairat was a staunch anti-Shia journalist and chronicler. After discussing the version of Maulana Muhmmad Husain Azad

15. *Hayat-i-Noor Jahan*, p. 7-10.
16. *Sawanih-Umri Noor Jahan Begum*, pp. 10-4.

he says that Azad being a Shia tries to victimise the Sunni ruler Jahangir. Mirza Hairat describes the disloyalty and the anti-State activities of Sher Afgan and holds them as the sole cause of his tragic end.

Muhammad Din Fauq (d. 1945), the well-known Urdu writer and historian, has also discussed this theme in his books.[17] He has criticised both Muhammad Husain Azad and Mirza Hairat Dehlawi. But his work is also not immune from baseless stories, having no base on the contemporary works.

This trend we find in almost all the Urdu books that are being brought out. Even the small books for children are not free from such unhistorical facts. The treatise entitled *Noor Jahan* published by Ferozsons, Lahore, may be mentioned as an instance in this connection.

Dr. Beni Prasad[18] is the first scientific writer and scholar who has sifted such stories very scientifically and carefully.

Such an analysis immunes the biography of Noor Jahan from all unnecessary and irrelevant romantic colour. Jahangir, no doubt, developed an unprecedented love for Noor Jahan, but it was never before A.D. 1611. It is the magic of the later writers from Khawafi Khan to Maulana Muhammad Husain Azad that strange stories have evolved. The very fact that all these writers differ in details, and none of the details is given by the contemporary chroniclers, proves the case against them.

17. See *Hayat-i-Noor Jahan wa Jahangir*, pp. 7-11.
18. *History of Jahangir*, pp. 147-52.

Chapter 3

THE WESTERN WRITERS AND NOOR JAHAN'S LOVE STORY

It is strange that all the Eastern and Western writers differ on the details of the love story of Noor Jahan. This very fact is sufficient to falsify the story. The romance as narrated by the Eastern writers in their Persian and Urdu histories has been discussed in the last chapter.

In this chapter a critical appraisal will be made of the story as given by the contemporary and later European writers and the Western and Eastern chroniclers of the modern times, using English as the medium of their expression.

The contemporary Jesuits and other European travellers generally base their accounts on what they heard from the man in the street. Many scandals and gossips current among the masses have also, therefore, been preserved by them. They have described the events of Noor Jahan's career.

Let us examine what is given by each one of them.

Sir Thomas Roe's Account. Sir Thomas Roe is the most famous of the European visitors during Jahangir's reign. His *Journal*[1] and correspondence have been preserved. In them he refers to Noor Mahal, the Court intrigues and the role of various personalities. He does not refer to any scandal pertaining to the love affair and marriage of Noor Jahan. It means that the society in which he spent the four years (1615 to 1619) of his stay did not provide him any such stories.

Edward Terry's Statement. Edward Terry was a clergyman in the company of Sir Thomas Roe. He also lived in the Mughal Court for a long time. He gives long and vivid descriptions of what he heard. He says only this much about Noor Jahan that Jahangir took her "out of the dust, from a very mean family."[2] Had he heard

1. See Sir William Foster (Ed.), *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India* (*1615 to 1619* A.D.).

2. *Voyage to East India*, p. 404.

about any scandal relating to her marriage, he would not have refrained from putting it down in his book.

Della Valle's Account. Della Valle travelled in A.D. 1623-4 along the western coast of India. He has narrated much about Noor Jahan but is silent about the scandal. His statement of her marriage is reproduced here:[3] "She was formerly wife in India to another Persian Captain, who served the Mughal too; but, after her husband's death a fair opportunity being offered, as it falls out many times to some handsome widows, I know not how[4] Shah Salim had notice of her and became in love with her."

The position Noor Jahan attained after her marriage led to speculation on the part of the people and different kinds of tales were circulated. One of such stories recorded by Della Valle is reproduced here. Jahangir "would have carried her [Noor Jahan] into his Harem . . . and kept her there like one of his other concubines, but the very cunning and ambitious woman . . . refused to go into his palace . . . saying that she had been the wife of an honourable captain and daughter of an honourable father. Wherefore, if his majesty had a fancy to her, he might take her for his lawful wife, whereby his honour would be not only not injured, but also highly enlarged, and, on this condition, she was at his service. Shah Salim so disdained this haughty motion at first that he had almost resolved . . . to give her in marriage to one of the races which they call Halal Khor. However, the woman persisting on her first resolution, intending rather to die than alter it, and love returning to make impetuous assaults on the king's heart; with the help, too, as some say, of sorceries practised by her upon him . . . at length he determined to receive her for his lawful wife and queen above all the rest."[5]

Peter Mundy's Account. Peter Mundy who travelled in India in 1629-34, in the reign of Shah Jahan, reproduces[6] a very nasty gossip. According to it, the husband of Noor Jahan, who was an

3. *Travels of P. D. Valle*, Vol. I, p. 53.
4. The answer to this "how" is found in *Iqbal Nama* (pp. 55-6):

"مدتی در خدمت ایشان [step-mother of Jahangir] بنا کامی گزرانید - - -
روزی در جشن نو رور جهان افروز بنظر دوربین آن حضرت مقبول آمده
در سلک پرستاران حرم سرائی خلافت انتظام یافت -"

5. *Travels of P.D. Valle*, Vol. I, pp. 53-4.
6. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 205-6.

"Amir" was slain in battle, being in rebellion. Mehr-un-Nisa was also fighting on an elephant encouraging the army of her husband. She was imprisoned and was brought before the King. "Showing herself somewhat haughty and stomachful, it is reported, he commanded she should be carried to the common stews, there to be abused by the baser sort, but this was not put in execution." Later on the Emperor developed admiration for the woman and made her his Empress.

This tale clearly reveals how the common man's mind worked in those days to fabricate fantastic and nasty tales.

The Statement of J. De Laet. J. De Laet, the Flemish scholar, who was a Director of the Dutch East India Company, wrote in 1631 a book on Indian history, geography and topography. It is a gazetteer of the reign of Jahangir. It was translated into English by J. S. Hoyland and published in 1928.

De Laet, while discussing the events of A.D. 1607, says, "It also came to the ears of the king that Sher Afgan, son-in-law of the captive Itimad-ud-Daula, had murdered the Governor of Bengal, Qutub-ud-Din Muhammad Khan Koka near Raj Mahal. However, Shaikh Ghiath-ud-Din, the brother of murdered Qutub-ud-Din, and his son Kishwar Khan cut off the head of the rebel Afgan, and sent it to the king. They also threw his brother, his son, his mother and his wife Mehr-un-Nisa (daughter of Itimad-ud-Daula), into rigorous imprisonment. All these events incensed the king yet more against his captive"[7] (i.e. Prince Khusrau). This extract shows that Sher Afgan was murdered as a result of his rebellious conduct. His father-in-law, Itimad-ud-Daula, was under arrest, as he was accused of embezzling Rs. 50,000. Sher Afgan's murder "incensed" the King against Khusrau. Soon after a plot against the King in favour of Prince Khusrau was discovered. Muhammad Sharif, a brother-in-law of Sher Afgan, was one of the three ring leaders who were executed. "However Dianat Khan interceded on behalf of Itimad-ud-Daula,[8] urging the king to allow him to be ransomed for two lakhs of rupees. To this the king agreed."

De Laet clarified the whole position and his account gives us a peep into the real circumstances responsible for Sher Afgan's death.

7. De Laet (English version), pp. 178-9. De Laet spells the proper nouns in a strange way. But I have followed the popular spellings.

8. Itimad-ud-Daula got this title later on. At that time he was only Mirza Ghiath.

Jahangir's love for Noor Jahan which started in A.D. 1611 as described by Mutamid Khan had nothing to do with it.

Like Mutamid Khan, De Laet also asserts that Mehr-un-Nisa and her little daughter were committed to the care of the Queen mother, Ruqayya Sultan Begum, "who received them with the greatest kindness, and could scarcely ever allow Mehr-un-Nisa out of her sight."

Once the Queen dowager took her into the King's palace. The King "loosened her veil with his own hand, and gazed at her face." A few days later the festival of the New Year was celebrated. The King was enjoying himself among his concubines. Mehr-un-Nisa came with her six or seven-year-old daughter. Being by this time deeply in love with Mehr-un-Nisa, the King exclaimed with a smile, "I will be father to this child." Mehr-un-Nisa replied, "Who am I that I should be numbered amongst the King's wives? Your Majesty must disregard me, who am I but a poor widow. Only take pity on this child." After this the King fell so passionately in love with Mehr-un-Nisa that he would repair in a boat every night.

The two stories of Jahangir's meetings with Mehr-un-Nisa appear to be quite natural and scientific. But the daily visits to Itimad-ud-Daula's house appear purposeless. Mehr-un-Nisa was not there. She was an attendant of the Queen mother. The Emperor should have gone to her palace for meeting Mehr-un-Nisa. Besides giving very convincing and careful analysis of the events, De Laet sometimes indulges in narrating the unsound tales, which had reached him in Europe.

The extreme and intense love for the lady which started in A.D. 1611, and the later development in Emperor's reliance on her, led to the concoction of many tales.

It appears that two of such stories have crept into this very useful and very scientific book. The first one is the story of Jahangir's daily visits to Itimad-ud-Daula's house. The second one is given below in De Laet's own words. "He had been in love with her when she was still a maiden, during the lifetime of his father Akbar; but she had already been betrothed to the Turk Sher Afgan, and hence his father would not allow him to marry her, although he never entirely lost his love for her."[9]

De Laet further reports that the King instructed Khwaja Abul Hasan to demand the hand of Mehr-un-Nisa for him from Itimad-

9. De Laet, pp. 180-2.

ud-Daula. The Khwaja was unwilling to carry out these instructions, "and represented to His Majesty how ill it consorted with the royal dignity for him to marry the daughter of a man who lay under such disgrace. The king received this advice with considerable displeasure, and drove Khwaja Abul Hasan away to carry the message.

"Finally an auspicious day having been selected, the king married her before Kazi. . . . The king loved her so deeply that heset her above all his other wives."

Manucci's Account. We have noticed so many interesting tales about the Imperial couple. Manucci's contribution in this connection is very romantic and interesting. The following story of Jahangir's falling in love with Noor Jahan is as startling as the famous pigeon-tale introduced in our literature by Muhammad Husain Azad in the last century.

According to Manucci, once Jahangir was sitting in his palace,[10] situated on the bank of the river Ravi. He saw a covered boat passing with its curtains down. The King noticed that a beautiful woman was sitting in the boat. "He fell so violently in love with her that he had no sleep nor rest; but the woman replied firmly to all the solicitations made to her on behalf of the king." She was the wife of a soldier of position named Sher Afgan.

The King, who had fallen deeply in love with her, sent an order to the Governor of Patna that as soon as Sher Afgan arrived there with a letter he must be slain. The valorous soldier, although taken unaware, killed five persons in defending himself, before he fell dead. Jahangir took the woman into his palace. She agreed to marry him on the conditions that she should be made the principal Queen, her father made a vizier, her brothers and relatives appointed grandees at the Court. All the demands were conceded to by the Emperor. The marriage was solemnised with great pomp and show. A grand feast, which lasted for eight days, was arranged.

Manucci who remained in India towards the end of the reign of Shah Jahan and during Aurangzeb's rule, regards Jahangir responsible for Sher Afgan's death. Sujan Rai,[11] his Indian contemporary, is perhaps the first authority to suspect Jahangir for the murder Sher Afgan.

10. Jahangir's palace is in the Lahore Fort. The river Ravi used to flow under it during the Mughal period. Now it has drifted about three miles towards the north-west. (See Latif's *History of Lahore*, pp. 84, 125.)

It means that it took three quarters of a century after Sher Afgan's death for such tales to become current in India.

Manucci, however, praises Noor Jahan for her judgement and her superb administration.

Manucci says that "Noor Jahan succeeded in making the king drink less than he had done formerly." The King agreed to drink not more than nine cups a day. "Every time he drank, it must be offered by her hand." Once, while listening to music, the King began to drink joyously. In a short time, he gulped the ninth cup. As music continued, Jahangir asked for more. The Queen refused. Jahangir went on asking for just one cup more. When he saw that the Queen would not listen to him, "he fell into a passion, laid hold of the Queen and scratched her, she doing the same on her side, grappling with the king, biting and scratching him, and no one dared to separate them."

The musicians hearing the noise began to weep, "tearing their garments and beating with their hands and feet as if someone was doing them an injury." Upon this the King and the Queen came out, leaving aside their quarrel, to find out the reason of all this hue and cry. Having seen that it was a feigned plot of the musicians, they laughed and the fight ended. The musicians were rewarded.

But the Queen, like all petted women, showed herself more angry and offended. She neither took his gifts nor listened to his excuses. At last she told the Emperor through an intermediary that the only way of ending the tension was for him to throw himself at the Queen's feet. The King, who could not live without Noor Jahan, was willing to carry out her wishes, but this show of utter humility towards the Queen making him look low before the people made him hesitant. He consulted an old woman. She advised him that, when the Queen walked in the garden with the sun shining on her head, he should place himself before her in such a way that the shadow of his body should reach the Queen's feet. Then he could beseech his Queen as if he were at her feet. The old woman contrived to create such a situation. The King approached the Queen, till his shadow was at her feet. "Behold, my soul is at your feet!" said the King. And thus peace was made.[12]

11. *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 448.
12. *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. I, pp. 161-4.

The intense association that developed between the Emperor and the Empress after their marriage led the common mind to fabricate such tales.

Chapter 4

THE TRAGIC CAREER OF SHER AFGAN

In Mughal India the marriages of the children of the State grandees were solemnised under the Royal patronage. No marriage could take place without the permission of the Emperor. In 1594 Mehr-un-Nisa was seventeen years old. She grew up to be a charming lass of good qualities. She was given education in the prevalent sciences and training in household chores.

Ali Quli, a young Iranian Turk, arrived in the Mughal Court at Lahore in 1594. He was wedded to Mehr-un-Nisa, the young daughter of Mirza Ghiath, with the blessings of Akbar. He was a Turk of Istajlu tribe.[1] He was a Safarchi (table attendant) of Shah Ismail II (d. A.D. 1578) of Iran. After his master's demise he fled from Iran. After a long course of wanderings and adventures he reached Multan through Qandhar. At that time Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan was leading a large army to Thatta. Ali Quli also joined the ranks. This was to prove a good opportunity for this young adventurer to show his worth and win his place in Mughal India. During the ensuing campaigns in Sind, Ali Quli distinguished himself by his valour, courage and intrepidity. His qualities attracted the eye of Khan-i-Khanan, who mentioned him in war despatches and procured him a mansab. The war concluded in the triumph of the Royalists. The Khan-i-Khanan took Ali Quli with him to Lahore. He presented him to the Royal court and introduced him into high circles. Lahore was the seat of Government at that time. Akbar's court as well as camp was stationed here. The Khan-i-Khanan did the same good turn to Ali Quli as Malik Masud had done to Mirza Ghiath. Ali Quli's presence at Lahore facilitated his marriage to the daughter of the Mirza, who was then an important mansabdar. It appears that Ali Quli served the Royal Court at Lahore for five years after his marriage. In 1599 Akbar deputed Prince Salim to a campaign against Mewar. Ali

1. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 55 (E. & D,. Vol. VI, p. 401); *Tuzk* (R. & B.) Vol. I, pp. 113-5; *Maathir*, Vol. I, pp. 129-30, Vol. II, pp. 622-5.

Quli was also placed on the staff of the prince. Ali Quli showed his bravery in this campaign. Once he behaved in an extremely courageous way and killed a tiger single-handedly. The prince was greatly pleased with him and conferred upon him the title of Sher Afgan. In 1601 Prince Salim rebelled against the Emperor. He set up an independent Court at Allahabad. It was during this period that Salim became instrumental in the ghastly murder of Abul Fazal in August 1602. Ali Quli Sher Afgan followed his patron, Prince Salim. Later on better judgement seems to have prevailed and Ali Quli deserted to Akbar.

Ali Quli Gets a Jagir in Bengal. In 1605 all the plans and intrigues against Prince Salim failed. He ascended the throne of India as Nur-ud-Din Jahangir. On this auspicious occasion he acted generously and overlooked Ali Quli's desertion and granted him an office and Jagir at Bardwan in Bengal. Bardwan is a very rich district in Bengal on the borders of Orissa, and is considered to be a purgatory in between the two hells of Bengal and Orissa.

Conditions in Bardwan. Bengal was at that time a hot-bed of intrigues. There were many Afghan chiefs and Jagirdars who were creating mischief. As Bengal was at a safe distance from the capital, they thought it a very convenient corner for mischief-mongering. They wanted to fish in the troubled waters and were ready to exploit the situation created by the death of Akbar and Khusrau's dispute with his father, Jahangir, on the question of succession of the Mughal throne.

Mehr-un-Nisa's Family Involved in Pro-Khusrau Activities. Towards the end of Akbar's reign an intrigue was hatched to supersede Salim by his own son Khusrau,[2] as a successor to the throne. For this Jahangir's own dissolute habits and reckless behaviour were mainly responsible. Khusrau was a young, handsome prince of seventeen years, and had given ample indication of his future greatness. He was also connected with the two prominent nobles of the Empire by the closest blood ties: he was the nephew of Kachhwaha Raja Man Singh who held the rank of seven thousand and Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka was his father-in-law. With selfish motives, they had started harping the cause of Khusrau.

The plan could not materialise. Before the demise of Akbar,

2. De Laet, p. 171; Gladwin, pp. 17-9.

the father and the son were reconciled. Jahangir ascended the hereditary throne in an atmosphere of cordiality and unity. Although it was a peaceful accession, yet the snake of conspiracy and discord was only scorched and not killed.

Raja Man Singh had taken his nephew Khusrau under his charge. On the morrow of Akbar's death he had got his boats ready at Jamuna to sail for Bengal with Khusrau. Meanwhile there were overtures from the new ruler for reconciliation, one of the conditions being guaranteed safety and security for Khusrau, of which Jahangir gave the assurance on most solemn oaths.

The next day Man Singh presented the prince at the Court. The Emperor embraced and kissed his son with warm affection. The Raja was sent back as Governor to his province of Bengal in all honour.[3] A few days later the Emperor gave Khusrau a lakh of rupees for repairing Munim Khan's house granted to him for residence at Agra.[4]

This reconciliation was a stroke of great statesmanship. In Bengal, Man Singh could easily set up an independent Court with Khusrau as his trump card. All the dissatisfied souls could gather round him. That province was already a hot-bed of intrigues. The hearts of Jahangir and Khusrau had been hopelessly rent asunder. It appeared that the one could not forgive the other and they could not forget the recent past. The young talented prince had been hurled down from the dreamland where he was to be saluted as the monarch. He could not reconcile himself to dependence and a long period of guarded retirement.

Meanwhile the opportunists seem to be very active. Left to himself the prince might have reconciled to a life of princely retirement, awaiting his opportunity after his father to measure swords with his brothers for securing the hereditary throne. It appears that the generous policy of Jahangir had not subdued the ambitions in the hearts of the adventurers.

Mirza Hasan Beg and Abdur Rahim were the arch intriguers. The relatives of the young prince also were not inactive. The prince enjoyed the sympathies of hermits like Guru Arjan. It appears that Man Singh also tried to create an atmosphere in

3. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 4; *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 53.

4. *Wiqayah Asad Beg*, Elliot and Dawson, Vol. VI, pp. 172-3; *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 12.

favour of the prince in Bengal. This is why he was recalled from Bengal immediately after the suppression of Khusrau's revolt. Man Singh had been appointed the Governor of Bengal by Akbar in 1008 A.H. He had suppressed the rebellion of Isa and Khwaja Uthman.

Jahangir reinstated him as the Governor of Bengal immediately after the death of Akbar. His recall from Bengal had political reasons.[5] Tod says that Jahangir imposed on him an enormous fine of ten crores of rupees. Jahangir had also sent Ali Quli Sher Afgan to Bengal as a sort of a check against the Pathan marauders. Like Man Singh, the Governor of Bengal, Sher Afgan also appears to have developed anti-Jahangir feelings.

When the revolt of Khusrau subsided, the Amir-ul-Umera and Asaf Khan were appointed as guards on Khusrau at Lahore. During Asaf Khan's turn, his nephew Nur-ud-Din many a time indulged in long conversations with the prince, as a result of which friendship developed between the two. Nur-ud-Din resolved to help the prince in his efforts for the throne. From Lahore the Emperor marched to Kabul. Amir-ul-Umera was not keeping good health and was left behind. Asaf Khan was made a vizier. Khusrau was entrusted to the custody of a eunuch, Itibar Khan by name. Khusrau possessed charming manners and an attractive mode of address which won for him Itibar Khan's affection and sympathy. They entered into a conspiracy. They were soon joined by another disaffected young noble, Fathullah, son of Hakim Abul Fateh. They canvassed very effectively and secured the active support of about four hundred accomplices, Muhammad Sharif Khan, a son of Mirza Ghiath Beg, being one of them. Itibar Khan took each one of them to the presence of the prince by way of introduction. They swore fidelity to the cause of the prince. He invested them each with a peculiar badge. The paternal feelings and affection moved Jahangir to undo the chains of Khusrau at Kabul. He allowed him to have a stroll in the Shahr Ara Garden. This clemency was bound to facilitate the progress of the plot. When the Royal camp moved from Kabul, the conspirators plotted to kill Jahangir and to proclaim Khusrau as the Emperor of India. The prince was highly popular with the general public. His cause was now espoused by many dignitaries of the Imperial Court. The scheme did not appear

5. *Rajasthan*, Vol. II, p. 287.

wholly impossible. But a secret confided to four hundred persons was likely to be divulged easily. Khwaja Wais, who was the Dewan of Prince Khurram, got the wind of the plot. He carried the information to the Emperor. At the same time Asaf Khan also learnt of it ; he communicated the facts to Salabat Khan who discussed the affairs with the Emperor and suggested grant of amnesty to one of the conspirators and to get full information from him. Mirza Muhammad Uzbeg was made an approver. He disclosed all he knew and provided clues to further discoveries. A bundle of Itibar Khan's letters was captured.

Sensation overtook the whole of the Court. Even the loyalists trembled with fear and dismay. But luckily for many of them, Salabat Khan earnestly advised the Emperor to desist from further inquiries. According to his counsel, the Emperor burnt the letters and refrained from exposing the many people involved to public shame. Only four of the ring leaders—Nur-ud-Din, Itibar Khan, Bedagh Turkman and Mirza Sharif Khan—were executed. Mirza Ghiath, the father of Mirza Sharif, was also suspected. He was confined for some time. Ultimately, he was released on payment of a fine of two lakhs of rupees.[6]

As we have seen above, Raja Man Singh was recalled from Bengal ; Jahangir could not, under the circumstances, rely upon him.

Bengal had been a hot-bed of Pathan intrigues, seditions and uprisings. So Qutub-ud-Din, the Emperor's foster-brother (Koka) was sent to Bengal in Safar 1015, with specific instructions to set the affairs right. Qutub-ud-Din Khan was one of the most favourite courtiers. The despatch of such a confidant to Bengal indicated that the situation in Bengal was very critical.

Sher Afgan was also suspected .He was a son-in-law of Mirza Ghiath and a subordinate of Raja Man Singh. Both of them had been condemned as supporters of Khusrau. Jahangir suspected him and advised his Governor to send him to the Court. In case of disobedience and insubordination he was authorised to punish him.

In May 1607, Qutub-ud-Din left for Bardwan. He summoned Sher Afgan for an interview; perhaps he wanted to arrest him. On 20 May, Sher Afgan, accompanied by only two grooms (one of them being a eunuch), came out to meet the Governor. As he

6, *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 27-30; *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 122-3; Gladwin, pp. 1-2; Dir Jarric, pp.160-1, *Maathir*, Vol. II, pp. 622-5 (for Sher Afgan's help).

entered the camp, the soldiers of the Royal army encircled him. He was infuriated. He sensed the coming danger and shouted in rage, "What type of behaviour is this?" The Khan ordered the people aside and went forth to him all alone. Sher Afgan was already out of temper on the behaviour of the soldiers. He drew his sword and struck the Governor. The Governor's bowls gushed out, but the brave man held his belly with one hand and ordered his men to kill the assailant. But the command was not necessary. Amba Khan, a Kashmiri retainer of Qutub-ud-Din, had already struck Sher Afgan on the head. He himself received a fatal blow in return. The soldiers rushed on Sher Afgan from all sides and literally cut him to pieces.[7] But Sher Afgan had himself taken his revenge. Amba Khan died on the spot. Qutub-ud-Din Khan breathed his last within twelve hours. This incident was the result of tactlessness on the part of Qutub-ud-din Khan. Sher Afgan's mangled remains were buried at Bardwan. His tomb is still traceable.[8] The year of his death is derived from the word ظلوم (1016).

The death of Qutub-ud-Din Khan deeply affected Jahangir. He hurls curses and abuses on Sher Afgan. He regards his murder as the greatest affliction after the death of his father.

7. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 113-5; *Tuzk* (Syed's Text), pp. 54-5; *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 23-4 (Motamid Khan calls Sher Afgan's first assailant as Pir Khan); *K. K.*, Vol. I, pp. 266-7; *Riaz-ul-Salatin*, pp. 172-3; *Maathir-ul-Umara*, Vol. II, pp. 622-4.

8. "M. Abdul Wali" Antiquities of Burdwan," *J. A.S. B.*, Vol. XIII, 1917, pp. 184-6.

Chapter 5

NOOR JAHAN IN THE ROYAL HAREM

According to the prevalent practice, the only fate that awaited Mehr-un-Nisa and her daughter, Ladli Begum, after the murder of Sher Afgan, was the status of a concubine. She was appointed the lady-in-waiting to the dowager Empress Ruqayya Sultan Begum in which position she spent four long years earnestly endeavouring to please her imperial mistress.[1] She displayed her qualities of head and heart in serving her and impressed her so much that very soon she became her confidante. She controlled her household and managed her estate in a masterly way. It was in March 1611 that the day of her good fortune dawned. In a Meena Bazar the Emperor Jahangir happened to see her. He was so much enamoured by her graces that he selected her for his own harem.

"بالجمله از نیرنگهای آسمانی روزی در جشن نو روز جهان افروز
بنظر دوربین آنحضرت مقبول آمده در سلک پرستاران حرم سرای خلافت
انتظام یافت" [2]

This is how a contemporary writer describes the event. It appears that it was for the first time in 1611 that Jahangir got the opportunity of seeing Noor Jahan. Although Mehr-un-Nisa was a thirty-four-year-old widow, and had undergone toils and tribulations after the sad incident of her husband's death, yet she retained her physical charm. The forty-two-year-old Emperor who had seen a large number of women by that time selected her for his harem. The Emperor very soon realised the greatness and grandeur of the character of that lady. Her qualities were recognised not only by the Emperor, the queen-mother also recommended her.

1. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 56; De Laet, p. 180; *Maathir*, Vol. I, p. 130, states that she was entrusted to the care of Salima Sultan, another dowager queen of Akbar, who was also his cousin (daughter of Gulrukh or Gulberg Begum). See *Maathir*, Vol. I, p. 375, for the account of Salima Sultan Begum.

2. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 56.

The Emperor married her and gave her the title of Noor Mahal[3] (Light of the Palace) in A.D. 1611. In March 1616 the title of Noor Jahan (Light of the World) was bestowed upon her.

Emperor Nur-ud-Din Jahangir and Empress Noor Jahan have become two very popular names in the annals of Mughal India. No other woman has ever enjoyed so much confidence of her husband as did this widow of a rebel petty officer. This marriage proved a source of progress and rise not only for the members of her family but also for the slaves and eunuchs of this illustrious house. Dil Aram was a wet nurse, who had suckled Noor Jahan in her infancy, was appointed head of the Ladies Apartment. She had the final say in all affairs pertaining to them. The orders of all scholarships and financial aids were issued under her seal.

Noor Jahan gathered more and more power and became very important. In January 1613 Salima Begum[4] died and the rank of Padishah Begum was conferred upon Noor Jahan.

Gradually Noor Jahan attained such a lofty position in the Empire that she shared with Jahangir all the royal prerogatives except the recitation of Khutba in her name. The coins issued in her name had the following impressions:

بحکم شاه جهانگر یافت صد زیور
بنام نور جهان بادشاه بیگم زر

The *farmans* issued[5] by her had the following lines:

''حکم علیه عالیه مهد علیا نور جهان بادشاه بیگم''

3. *Tuzk* (R. & B.) Vol., I, p. 319; Khawafi-Khan, Vol. I, pp. 2[illegible].

4. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 232; *Rieu's Catalogue*, Vol, I, p. 171; *Iqbal Nama* p. 68.

5. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 56-7.

Chapter 6

NOOR JAHAN'S ASCENDANCY FIRST PHASE [1611-1620]

Jahangir's marriage with Noor Jahan in 1611 marks the dawn of a new era not only in the history of Mughal India but in that of Noor Jahan's family also.

As a result of the complicity of Mirza Sharif and Mirza Ghiath (Noor Jahan's brother and father, respectively) in pro-Khusrau intrigues[1] and the murder of Sher Afgan, this rising family had faced a temporary eclipse. The matrimonial connection with the royal family, however, soon paved the way again for their progress. Mirza Ghiath held the rank of one thousand in 1605. In 1611 he got the rank of two thousand zat and five hundred swar and consequently he rose to the rank of seven thousand zat and seven thousand swar by 1619. Similarly, his son Mirza Abul Hasan got the post of Nazim-i-Bayutat (master of the household). He also embarked upon a brilliant career. His younger sons, Itiqad Khan and Ibrahim Khan, also entered very brilliant careers after 1611. There is no doubt that all these people were endowed with extraordinary abilities; they adjusted themselves successfully with the new environments. They proved equal to the task that confronted them. It was, however, Noor Jahan's marriage with the Emperor that provided them with a favourable chance to rise.

Noor Jahan was a talented but very ambitious lady. She wanted to wield power and share authority with her illustrious husband. Her father and three brothers in the Court and her mother Ismat Begum within the palace proved bulwarks for her authority. They helped her in attaining complete control over the State affairs. They all constituted a nucleus round which many nobles gathered to attain power and authority. This group, called Noor Jahan Junta by historians, worked very successfully with unity and cohesion till 1620.

1. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 113-5 De Laet; pp. 178-9; *Maathir-ul-Umara*; Vol. II, pp. 622-7.

In April 1612 Arjumand Bano Begum,[2] Asaf Khan's daughter, was married to Prince Khurram. The prince was a budding youth of twenty years at that time. In his early childhood, he was extremely loved by his grandfather, Akbar.

Ruqayya Sultan Begum, one of Akbar's Chughtai wives, doted upon him. Like other Mughal princes he had received very profound education. As Khusrau, the eldest prince, had conspired and rebelled against his father, and had thus lost all chances of succession to his ancestral throne, Khurram was looked upon as the heir to the throne.[3]

Prince Parvez[4] was no doubt full of ambition, but he was devoid of the necessary abilities. He was also extremely addicted to drinking.

Shahryar[5] was born in 1605, and was yet a mere child. It was the height of diplomacy on the part of Noor Jahan to connect the prospective heir to the throne with her family. If the future Emperor of India was also one of their own, the ascendancy of Noor Jahan Junta was assured.

The month of April 1912 witnessed the Court in a festive mood at the nuptials[6] of the heir with the niece of the Empress. The prince and Asaf Khan both were for pomp and ceremony. They vied with each other in ostentations and splendid display. Jahangir personally headed the marriage procession. He spent a a day and a night at the house of Asaf Khan. It was the happiest day for Mehr-un-Nisa.

Arjumand Bano was extremely beautiful and lovely. She had a generous, pure and dutiful heart. In polygamous families very few marriages had been so happy and successful. Shah Jahan was so enamoured of her that after her death, he raised an eternal monument to her memory in the Taj Mahal which still stands as a symbol of his love for her.

Despite all this, the marriage was a political one. It cemented the alliance among Noor Jahan, Mirza Ghiath, Asaf Khan and the heir apparent. For the next ten years, this group of extremely

2. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 217.
3. Ibid., p. 48.
4. Ibid., pp. 18-9.
5. Ibid., p. 20.
6. Ibid., pp. 224-5, 306-7; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 67 ; Kamboh, Vol, I, pp. 31, 32, 50.

capable persons practically ruled the Empire. The sway of Noor Jahan was really the domination of this group. Within a few years (in A. D. 1617) Khurram got, in preferance to his brothers, the unprecedented rank of thirty thousand zat and twenty thousand[7] swar.

The historians are unanimous in asserting that the sway of Noor Jahan was complete. But they fail to understand the share of her associates in her authority.

Jahangir's Role (1611-1622). Generally it is believed that Jahangir handed over the administrative duties completely to his wife, Noor Jahan. This belief resulted because of Noor Jahan's extraordinary rise. Perhaps Noor Jahan's capability to rule and Jahangir's weakness for wine and meat and merry-making was the main reason of the popularity of this view.

"مکرری فرمودند که من سلطنت را بنور جهان بیگم ارزانی داشتم
بجزیک سیر شراب و نیم سیر گوشت مرا هیچ در نمی باید"

I personally feel that Jahangir's remark was only casual and in a humorous vein. This saying of the Emperor, however, became so popular that Bernier, writing in the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign, makes a mention of it. He says, "the wife of Jahangir who so long wielded the sceptre while her husband abandoned himself to drunkenness and dissipation."[8]

It appears to be a mistake to think that the Emperor was reduced to a cipher. All the rules of foreign and domestic policy laid down by him or his father were very seriously adhered to. All the institutions of Government were maintained. The dominant Junta studied the imperial temperament closely and sought to humour him. He was not blindly followed by them. In this period he continued to take keen interest in State affairs. Many a time he interposed with vigour against them.

Sir Thomas Roe has narrated a very interesting event.[9] A case of injustice to the English merchants on the western coast of Southern India was reported to the Emperor. The name of Prince Khurram was mentioned in this respect. Having heard this the Emperor was greatly enraged. He summoned the prince and severely

7. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 57 (E. and D., Vol. VI, p. 405); *Tatimma* (E. and D., Vol. VI, p. 399).

8. *Bernier's Travels*, p. 5.

9. *The Embassy of Sir T. Roe*, pp. 147-8.

reprimanded him.

It was only at a later stage, when the Emperor was broken down in health, that he ceased to exercise real influence on the administration. The period of Noor Jahan's ascendancy is divided into two periods. In the first period from 1611 to 1622 Jahangir was a factor to be reckoned with. The members of the Junta aimed at pleasing him and getting their wishes realised through him. Mirza Ghiath, Itimad-ud-Daula and his wife were alive.

Noor Jahan and Prince Khurram were in close alliance. During this period the Junta maintained the Empire in peace and prosperity. They looked after their own ends as well as the interests of the Empire. Most of the vacancies in the Imperial services were filled by their own favourites. The goodwill of the Empress and her associates was the only passport to honour and rank.

Jealousy of the Nobility. The undue domination and extraordinary authority of the Noor Jahan Junta was naturally disliked by the nobility. It roused their jealousy and hostility. The people, who fancied that they had been deprived of their due share in power, felt disgruntled and dissatisfied. Some Umera outwardly bowed to them waiting for an opportunity to take revenge. But the more outspoken spirits like Mahabat Khan could not be cowed down.

Immediately after the accession of Jahangir he had to face the deep-rooted opposition of the Khusrau Junta. Even the suppression of his rebellion could not completely wipe out this danger. The nobles like Khan-i-Azam and Man Singh were openly with Khusrau. A large number of them joined a very dangerous intrigue against the reigning sovereign.

Mirza Sharif[10] had to lose his head and Mirza Ghiath was fined heavily, as we have discussed in another chapter. Jahangir was in a very critical situation. His paternal love for his eldest son Khusrau collided with his duty as a monarch. The court Umera were opportunists and were ready to resort to treason, if they expected any benefit out of it.

The Noor Jahan Junta provided the Emperor with a strong and loyal[11] party. "In this phase Jahangir got a sincere worker and an adviser in the person of Noor Jahan who, with the help of her inborn sagacity and ability, was striving for the stability of Jahangir's

10. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 113; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 22.
11. De Laet, pp. 177-9; *Maathir*, pp. 622-7.

authority. It appears that the rise of Noor Jahan gave mental relief to Jahangir. It was this mental relief that made Jahangir say he entrusted administration of the Empire to Noor Jahan for a cup of wine.

Rivalry between Khurram and Khusrau for the Throne. It was very unfortunate that in the lifetime of Akbar Khusrau was hailed as a rival of his father for the ancestral throne. But he could notsucceed. It is all the more unlucky that the first notable event of Jahangir's reign is the rebellion of Khusrau, his own son. After the rebellion was crushed, the participants were brutally punished, and Khusrau was bitterly reproached and put to confinement. Later on a plot was hatched to assassinate the King and to enthrone Khusrau. The fortunate discovery of this plot led to the punishment of ring leaders. Neither Jahangir's heart, nor the Imperial ladies, nor the senior nobility could consent to the execution of the prince. A group headed by Mahabat Khan pressed that he should be blinded. It was essential, they said, in the interest of general peace. At last Jahangir agreed on this ghastly action. Mahabat Khan himself was commissioned to perform this cruel job. The sight was not. however, irreparably damaged.

Jahangir reached Agra on 22 March 1608. The father in him softened towards Khusrau and he called the physicians to restore his sight. The Iranian physician, Hakim Sadra,[12] restored the vision of one of the eyes. The vision of the other eye was permanently effected, and was never entirely cured.

The sufferings of the prince increased his popularity among the masses. Taking advantage of this an obscure Muslim of Bihar, Qutub by name, personated the prince, and declared that he had escaped from the prison. He gathered a large band round him and marched on Patna, the capital of Bihar. Due to the absence of the Governor Afzal Khan (*alias* Abdur Rahman Khan) from the capital, he succeeded in capturing it. The Governor had to win the capital back with great difficulty and after much bloodshed. Qutub was executed, and many of his followers imprisoned[13].

Let us examine the position of the two claimants to the throne, Khusrau and Khurram, in this background. Khusrau and his supporters were still hoping for the throne. Khurram's position had

12. *Intikhab-i-Jahangir Shahi* (E. & D.), Vol. VI, pp. 448, 449, 452.
13. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 173-6; *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 42-4,

become very strong during this period. He had been united with the family of Noor Jahan through marriage with her niece, and was being supported by her. He was the candidate of the Junta.

The disgruntled rival party of the Umera looked upon Khusrau as their candidate. Khusrau's personal magnetism, his spotless character and, most of all, his sufferings had endeared him to the public. The ladies of the Harem had a soft corner for him. The Khan-i-Azam was devoted to his cause. For the dissatisfied nobility he was the only ray of hope.

Perhaps due to the mild attitude of Jahangir towards Khusrau, or to the propaganda of his supporters, it was commonly believed that Jahangir was deeply attached to him, and he had a mind to nominate him as his successor in preference to the proud, overbearing Khurram. They believed that Khusrau was not released because of the fear of his extreme popularity and the machinations[14] of the Empress and Prince Khurram. In 1614, Khan-i-Azam[15] was placed under the custody of his enemy, Asaf Khan, in Gwolior fort. The same year some restrictions were imposed upon Prince Khusrau. It was a great success for the Noor Jahan Junta.

The year 1616 was auspicious for the Junta. Prince Khusrau was transferred from the charge of Ani Rai Singh Dalan to that of Asaf Khan "for certain considerations," as Jahangir[16] himself makes us believe.

Sir Thomas Roe, the well-known English envoy, gives a very interesting account of the successful plot of the Junta that resulted in Khusrau's transfer to the charge of Asaf Khan.

The Junta feared that the future of their ascendancy could not be assured unless and until Khusrau was alive. His popularity in the Court and among the public could become a hurdle in their way. In case Jahangir died suddenly, the Rajput chief, the care-taker of Khusrau, could easily exploit the situation. Sir Thomas Roe, reports that Noor Jahan approached the King with false fears that Khusrau was neither safe nor were his ambitious thoughts dead. The Emperor soothed her, but he could not be moved to take any step. Once when the King was under the spell of wine, Prince Khusrau, Itimad-ud-Daula and Asaf Khan moved the King that, in the interest of the safety of Khusrau and the honour of the family, it was

14. *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, Vol. II, p. 280; Terry, pp. 411-2.
15. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 261.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

essential that he should be under the charge of his brother instead of being with a Rajput gentile. The King consented and went to sleep. The same night Asaf Khan went to Ani Rai Singh and demanded the prince. Ani Rai Singh refused saying that he was a humble servant of Khusrau, but as he was entrusted the charge by the King, he would deliver Khusrau to none but the King and asked him to wait till the morning. This answer cooled them all. The next day Ani Rai Singh paid a visit to the King and apprised him of the demand of the prince, his refusal, and answer. He further submitted that the Emperor had given him the charge of his son and made him the commander of four thousand horse. He would die at the gate rather than deliver the prince to the hands of his enemy. He was ready to deliver him only to the Emperor. The Emperor said, "You have acted honestly and faithfully. You have answered discretely. Continue with your duties like this without bothering about such commands." The Junta had also to keep silent over the incident.[17]

Despite this failure the Junta persisted in their designs. When Prince Khurram was preparing to march to the Deccan, the Junta once more resolved that they were not secure if Sultan Khusrau remained in the hands of Ani Rai. In Khurram's absence the Emperor might be reconciled with Khusrau. His liberty was dangerous to their future hopes. They again approached the Emperor to entrust Khusrau to the charge of Asaf Khan as his guardian under Sultan Khurram. They argued that it would frighten the Khan-i-Khanan and the Deccanis. On hearing that the prince who marched against them was so favoured and relied upon as to hold the charge of his elder brother, they would be greatly intimidated. "The King," says Sir Thomas Roe,[18] "who had yielded himself into the hands of a woman (i.e. Noor Jahan) could not defend his son from their practices. He either sees not the ambition or trusts it too far in confidence of his own power, and consents." Khusrau was placed under the charge of Asaf Khan's soldiers. Prince Khurram sent two hundred of his soldiers to assist them.

Roe[19] gives us in the above description what was popularly gossiped regarding this affair in the Court, in the camp and in the market.

17. Ibid.
1 . Roe, Vol. II, pp. 292-3.
19. Ibid., p. 294.

This decision caused deep consternation among the people. It was a great victory for the Junta, and was fraught with deep menace not only to the future but even to the personal safety of Prince Khusrau. The sister of Khusrau and other women refused to take their meals as a protest. They condemned the cruelty and the dotage of the King. The Emperor had to give an undertaking for the safety of Khusrau. He sent Noor Mahal to appease the enraged ladies. But they cursed and refused to see her.

Sir Thomas Roe, an eye-witness of these events, has also preserved the reaction of the common people: "They say the King hath not delivered his son's but his own life into the hands of an ambitious prince and a treacherous faction. That Khusrau cannot perish without scandal to the father and revenge from him. Therefore he must go first and after him his son; and so through their bloods this youth (Khurram) must mount the royal seat."

New hopes of the re-delivery of the prince were generated and soon allayed. Every man spread news according to his own fears and desires. The whole Court was busy in whispering and the nobility was sad.

It was believed at that time that Khurram was making secret attempts upon the life of his brother. The intrigues and conspiracies of the rival parties kept the Court in agitation. The people were confident that the death of Jahangir would be the signal for a bloody civil war between the adherents of the rival princes. It was under these circumstances that Sir Thomas Roe[20] thought it his duty to warn the East India Company not to extend their business too far into the country. Their agents must concentrate at a few central places. They should refrain from participation in the local politics.

20. Ibid., pp. 295-6.

Chapter 7

THE SECOND PHASE OF NOOR JAHAN'S ASCENDANCY

Noor Jahan and her party had gathered great strength. Khurram, the prospective successor, was with her. Her father and brother were supreme in the Court. Itimad-ud-Daula, who came to Mughal India a penniless and homeless adventurer and was under Imperial displeasure immediately after the accession of Jahangir, had arisen to the first place in the Mughal Court. Asaf Khan enjoyed the second position. He was the father-in-law of Prince Khurram. It is strange that even these blood ties could not hold this Junta united—their unity dashed against the rock of the unfettered ambitions of two persons—Noor Jahan and Khurram.

Nature had granted Jahangir a splendid constitution, which was seriously affected by excessive use of wine and opium and a life of ease and dissipation. With advance in age he was going from bad to worse. Soon he was a miserable decrepit. In 1618 when he was touring through Gujrat he found himself unequal to the hot and sultry summer. He fell ill and showed serious symptoms of asthema.[1] He improved a little due to the treatment of Hakim Ruhullah. In November 1620 when he returned to the plains, he suffered a relapse and was on the brink of the grave. Hakim Rukna, Hakim Sadra, called the Messiah of the age, and Hakim Abul Qasim were not very hopeful. He tried to drown his pain in the flood of liquor. It instead deepened his misery. Parvez hurried to his father. The affectionate care of Noor Jahan, however, saved him. She persuaded him to minimise drinking. She gently led him to abstain from unwholesome diet and to take appropriate remedies. Although his health became delicate, yet he recovered.

Jahangir decided to leave Agra. He founded a new city for himself by the hillside on the bank of the Ganges. Later on he abandoned this project, and started visiting Kashmir annually. In

1. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, pp. 12-3, 35.

the beginning of 1623, was not yet in a fit condition of health to write his daily diary. He, therefore entrusted the task to Motramid Khan. The convalascent Emperor was helped in his administrative work by the Empress. Gradually the whole of administration passed into the hands of Noor Jahan.[2]

Noor Jahan had become supreme for the moment. This satisfied her ambitious nature. But the rapidly declining health of the Emperor alarmed her very much. She was worried that her husband who was the source of her authority might expire at any moment, leading to her utter ruin and total disaster. Should her domination come to an end with the death of Jahangir? Would it be possible for her to maintain this supremacy under Shah Jahan also, who was a member of the Junta and a son-in-law of her brother, Asaf Khan. Shah Jahan was nearly thirty years old at that time. He had been designated heir apparent with unprecedented honour and dignities. All classes of the people had been trained to look upon him as their future master. His influence had been established in several provinces. Many distinguished generals and regiments were under his influence. Noor Jahan had a long and close association with him, but the prince was energetic and ambitious. Nature had gifted him with ability to rule and command. He had inherited bravery and the power of self-assertion from his Rajput mother. He could not become a tool in the hands of the imperious Noor Jahan. Two strong spirits imbued with feelings of self-assertion could not be adjusted within a single empire. Now both of them understood each other well. They could not remain under any misconception. Noor Jahan had only two alternatives: she must either retire from public lifea fter the death of Jahangir, or manoeuvre so that Shah Jahan should not get his ancestral throne. She must bring forward some comparatively weak prince who should depend on her and who should look upon her as his guardian angel and benefector. A woman of Noor Jahan's character and calibre could adopt only the second course. It was bound to be a very difficult matter, but Noor Jahan was not to be deterred. Unfortunately for her, Shahriyar was to be this prince.

Before proceeding further let us make a study of the character and personality of Shahriyar. He was the youngest surviving son of

2. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, pp. 176, 178, 213, 214, 215, 217, 246, 248; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 184 , *M.U.*, Vol. I, p. 577; *Padshah Nama* (Lahori), Vol. I, Part II, p. 347.

Jahangir. Although he had completed sixteen years of his life at that time, he had never shown any promise of his abilities. He lacked the strength of character. He was incapable and could neither win nor maintain any greatness or dignity if it was thrust him. It was Noor Jahan's personal requirements that had brought him into the limelight. He was given undue publicity.[3] He does not appear to have impressed the popular opinion as it is evident from the fact that the public clamped on him the nickname of "good for nothing" (ناشدنی).

Shahriyar was the most appropriate tool that Noor Jahan needed. Among the sons of Jahangir Khusrau was very ambitious and popular. He had the inborn ability and aptitude to be a ruler. Moreover, relations between Noor Jahan and Khusrau were so strained due to the grievous wrongs done to him by her, that the chances of *rapprochement* were very remote. About the years 1616 and 1617, there was a popular rumour current in India that Noor Jahan wanted to marry her daughter to Khusrau. On 12 December 1616, Sir Thomas Roe, our valuable authority, wrote from Surat: "Sultan Khusrau shall marry Noor Mahal's daughter and have liberty."[4] Again, on 21 August 1617, he wrote, "Noor Jahan and Asaf Khan, by their father's advice, came out to make a peace with Khusrau and alliance and with infinite joy his liberty is expected."[5] He wrote on 25 August 1617, "This day feasted Noor Mahal the Prince Khusrau; as is reported to make a firm alliance and that he will marry a wife, by his father's importunity. This will beget his full liberty and our proud master's ruin."[6] Most probably, by "proud master" he means Khurram. Another European writer Della Vella[7] describes that Noor Mahal repeatedly offered her daughter in marriage to Khusrau. Even his first wife requested him to accept the alliance as it was bound to bring him liberty and prosperity, but the prince rejected the proposal due to his conjugal fidelity to her. It was in despair that Noor Mahal later on decided to marry her daugter to Shahriyar.

It can now safely be inferred that Noor Jahan's search for a tool for her future prosperity and domination led to the circulation

3. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, pp. 197, 199, 202.
4. Roe, p. 363.
5. Ibid., p. 404.
6. Ibid., p. 407.
. Della Valle, Vol. I, pp. 56-7.

of such stories. Noor Jahan might have thought of selecting Khusrau as her candidate. He was popular. One of her brothers had lost his life for his sake, and her father had also suffered. Either Khusrau could not be won over as the rumours tell, or Noor Jahan was afraid of his character that he would not make a good tool. It is also possible that such overtures of Noor Jahan made Khurram cautious and he did away with his elder brother Parvez who was a mediocre devoid of ability and intelligence, but very ambitious and vain.

Ladli's Betrothal to Shahriyar. His tender age and docile character made Shahriyar the proper instrument for the crafty Noor Jahan.

In December 1620 Shahriyar and Ladli Begum were betrothed.[8] Ladli Begum was the daughter of Noor Jahan by Sher Afgan. This ceremony was performed with great pomp and show at Lahore Fort in the new buildings which had been constructed by the Emperor. The Emperor gave a gift of one lakh of rupees. He graced the ceremonies and entertainments with his presence. In April 1621 the marriage was solemnised at Agra.[9] Very grand and dazzling ceremonies were organised. The marriage procession headed by the Emperor and his Harem went to the mansion of Itimad-ud-Daula, the grandfather of the bride. It looks very strange that the Emperor hoped that the marriage "would be propitious to this ever-increasing State."

Shahriyar was raised to the rank of 8,000[10] zat and 4,000 swar, and was profusely honoured.

From April 1621 Noor Jahan embarked on a hazardous enterprise. She was bound to lose the sympathies of her brother Asaf Khan, whose daughter Arjumand Bano was the dearly loved wife of Khurram. He rightly saw his future interests secure in his powerful son in-law.

Unfortunately, at this critical juncture (in 1621) Noor Jahan lost her mother Asmat Begum.[11] The death of Asmat Begum was a crushing blow to her aged and devoted husband Itimad-ud-Daula. Nobody, not even the children and the grand-children, could sooth the afflicted heart of the aged husband.

8. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol II, pp. 187-8.
9. Ibid., p. 202.
10. Ibid., p. 199.
11. Ibid., p. 216.

Noor Jahan did her best to console her father. In the winter of 1621-2 the Royal couple went on a tour to Northern India. The aged and forlorn Itimad-ud-Daula was also taken along with them. On the way he fell ill at Bahlwan. The Royal couple had started on a visit to Kangra, but were recalled by the news of the serious illness of the old man. His health had taken a very serious turn. The news disturbed Noor Jahan very much. The shock of the mother's loss was revived. Jahangir was also nervous. They hurried back, and by the same evening they reached the bedside of the ailing old man. His critical condition perturbed them. His mind was deranged and he often sank into fits of coma. Noor Jahan, pointing at her husband, asked him, "Do you recognise him?" The dying man regained his consciousness and recited the following couplet of Anwari:

آنکه نابینائے مادر زاد اگر حاضر شود

در جبین عالم آرائش به بیند سهتری

["Were a born blind man present,
He would recognise majesty in his world-adorning forehead.]

Some time after this he breathed his last,[12] and his dead body was sent to Agra for burial adjacent to the grave of his wife Asmat Begum.

The death of the parents of Noor Jahan finally broke up the Junta that had ruled over the Empire very wisely for over a decade. The services of this Junta cannot be minimised. Although they worked for the realisation of their own ambitions, yet their contribution to the building up of the Empire is appreciable. From 1622 to 1627 Asaf Khan was one of the most important men in the State and served as an adviser and helper of his royal sister; however, he was secretly working for his son-in-law, Prince Khurram, against the interests of his ambitious sister's nominee and son-in-law, Prince Shahriyar.

12. Ibid., p. 222. See *Maathir*, Vol. I, pp. 127-34, for his biography.

Chapter 8

NOOR JAHAN AND KASHMIR

Jahangir and Noor Jahan were the lovers of nature. So their liking to the vale of Kashmir was immense. Jahangir visited Kashmir eight times. Twice he went in the company of his father. He paid six visits to this land of charm and gaiety as Emperor of the Mughal India, accompanied by his lovely consort, Noor Jahan. It was in the fourteenth, sixteenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first years of his reign. The romantic spirit of the Empress appears to have led the Emperor into the most secluded and enchanting recesses of the valley. They passed their time in festivities. Many pleasant retreats of the valley are even now pointed out as the spots where the imperial couple used to enjoy themselves during their sojourns in the valley. The crystal-clear waters of the Dal Lake many a time reflected brilliant illuminations and fantastic fireworks arranged in their honour. The drowsy bewitching air must have re-echoed the sound of song and dance. The Mughals are credited to have introduced many Central Asian fruits and flowers in this sub-continent. It is said that Jahangir brought "Chinar" (plain tree) from Iran and planted it in Kashmir to please Noor Jahan.[1] But this popular romantic tale is historically unsound. "Chinar" did exist in Kashmir even before the Mughal occupation. Jahangir himself noted large old plain trees in the Kashmir valley.[2] Jahangir took great interest in the country, its people and their culture as he has given a very vivid record in his memoirs.

The construction of palaces, gardens and villas had started under Akbar immediately after the annexation of Kashmir. The imperial couple (Jahangir and Noor Jahan) had very appropriately contributed their share to the decoration of this valley.

1. *Kashmir*, Vol. I, p. 252.
2. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 154.

The world famous "Shalimar Gardens"[3] were laid by Jahangir. The description of this earthly paradise cannot be complete without a mention of this Royal couple that was the moving spirit of this fascinating spot. I cannot restrain quoting here some verses[4] by the late Justice Shah Din, depicting the Royal visit to Shalimar:

نور جہاں جو حسن میں پتلی تھی نور کی
اور قد میں جیسے سرو لب جوئبار ہو
آ کر یہاں جماتی تھی وہ دلفریب رنگ
قربان جس پہ جان سے سو لالہ زار ہو
اور آنا اس کے ساتھ شہ مے پرست کا
جس کی نگہ سے چشم طرب میں خمار ہو
سامان عیش اور وہ عشرت کی محفلیں
وہ راتیں جن پہ روز درخشاں نثار ہو

The happy days of Jahangir and Noor Jahan in the valley of Kashmir have been portrayed by Thomas Moore in his romantic Poem *Lalla Rookh*. Let us quote a few lines from this immortal poem:

And Salim to his heart has caught
In blushes, more than ever bright,
His Nourmahal, his Harem's light !
And well do vanish'd frowns enhance
The charm of every brighten'd glance;
And dearer seems each dawning smile
For having lost its light awhile;
And, happier now for all her sighs
As on his arm her head reposes,
She whispers him, with laughing eyes,
"Remember, love, the Feast of Roses."

A large number of such references can be gleaned out. But we only confine to these two.

Jahangir laid Shalimar Gardens in 1030/1620. He called it *Farah B.kh h* (Delightful). Noor Jahan's moonlit night strolls in this fragrant and flowery garden with sparkling fountains, and flowing waters, must have been an enchanting experience. The following lines of Urfi (عرفی) fitly describe Shalimar:

3. *Kashir*, Vol II, pp. 530-2.
4. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 253.

این سبزه و این چشمه و این لاله و این گل
آن شرح ندارد که بگفتار در آید

The beauty of this garden has inspired a Kashmiri poet Sharif to express his feelings in the following lines :

دیدۂ شوق ہے روشن انھی نظاروں سے
بے گماں حسن برستا ہے یہ فواروں سے
اس کے پہلو میں جہانگیر کا دل ہے پنہاں
جس سے آتی ہے صدا نور جہاں! نور جہاں!

In A.D. 1623 Noor Jahan laid out a garden called "Bahar Ara"[5] on the western arm of the Dal. It was arranged and decorated according to her taste. In it there was a palace which presented a very impressive view of the lake on moonlit nights. The garden has now disappeared due to the vicissitudes of time and the site is now occupied by a leper asylum.

Ver-Nag is a very lovely place where a spring, set in a very picturesque atmosphere, is situated. It is the source of River Jehlum. For the people who appreciate the charm of solitude in a beautiful setting, Ver-Nag is the most suitable place. The land around it is very fertile and fascinating. Originally, the spring was a shapeless pond, with water oozing out from its different holes. Jahangir appreciated this place very much. He built round the spring the Octagonal Tank[6] of sculptured stones in A.D. 1619. A fine garden in front of it was also laid. Halls and houses were set up. The place got the name of Shahabad (the abode of king). There are two inscriptions of Jahangir on the spring. The first one dates 1029 A.H. (A.D. 1619) and the second 1036 A.H. (A.D. 1626).

The first inscription[7] *:*

از جہانگیر شاہ اکبر شاہ این بنا سر کشیدہ بر افلاک
بانیٔ عقل یافت تاریخش قصر آباد و چشمۂ ورناگ

[Through Jahangir Shah, the son of Akbar Shah, this foundation raised its head to heavens. The source of wisdom discovered its date (1029 A.H.=A.D. 1619) from "May the palace and the spring of Ver Nag endure!"]

5. Ibid., p. 533.
6. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 92.
7. Kashir, Vol. II, pp. 536-7.

The second inscription :

حیدر بحکم شاہ جہاں بادشاہ دہر
شکر خدا کہ ساخت چنین آبشار جوئے
این جوئے دادہ است زجوئے بہشت یاد
زین آبشار یافتہ کشمیر آبروئے
تاریخ جوئے گفت بگوشم سروش غیب
از چشمۂ بہشت برون آمد است جوئے

[God be thanked! by order of the world monarch, the King of the Universe, Haidar constructed such a cascade and such a water course.

This water-course is reminiscent of the stream that flows in the Paradise, and the cascade has brought honour to Kashmir. The invisible angel whispered the date (1036 A.H.=A.D. 1626) of the water-course in my ear: "This stream has sprung from the fountain of Paradise."]

Noor Jahan seems to have spent some time in this fascinating atmosphere. The ruins of the palace bear testimony to the fact that it was an abode of royalty. It is fifteen miles from Srinagar.

Abdul Hamid Lahori[8] gives the names of a large number of gardens built by the Mughals in Kashmir. According to Lawrence,[9] there were 777 gardens in Mughal period in the Dal area.

The Shahi Masjid of Srinagar. Whenever we talk of Mughal architecture our attention is diverted to their buildings at Agra and Delhi, or at least to their monuments at Lahore. But the hilly regions of Kashmir also became the centre of architectural activities of the Mughals.

Noor Jahan added a mosque to the galaxy of buildings constructed in Kashmir by the Mughals. It is called "Nau Masjid" (New Mosque), "Shahi Masjid" (Royal Mosque) and "Pathar Masjid" (Stone Mosque). It is executed in grey limestone readily available in Kashmir. The mosques in the valley are generally wooden mosques.

The facade[10] of this mosque consists of nine arches including the central arched portico. "The arched openings are enclosed in shallow decorative cusped arches, which in their turn are enclosed

8. *Badshah Nama*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 26-9.

9. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 194.

10. *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 80; Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture, Islamic Period*, p. 88.

in rectangular frames." The arches are horizontal. "The half attached 'bed-post' columns in the two outer angles of the jambs of the entrance are noteworthy. The plinth is surmounted by a lotus-leaf coping. The frieze between the projecting cornice and the eaves is decorated with a series of large lotus leaves, carved in relief, some of which have been pierced and thus made to serve the purpose of ventilation apertures." The roof is sloping, except in the centre, where there was a dome, which was dismantled in the Sikh period. The roof is supported on eighteen massive columns. The enclosure is built of bricks with a coat of lime plaster adorned by a range of shallow arched niches.

A very curious story[11] is current about this mosque. When the mosque was completed, it is said, Noor Jahan was questioned about its cost. In response she is said to have pointed to her jewelled slippers and replied, "As much as that." When the Ulema heard of it, they gave the verdict that the mosque was not fit for religious use. This ridiculous story is a later concoction. The founder of a place of worship would never remark in this way about it. During the Sikh rule it was closed and used as a rice granary. Under Dogra rule also it was similarly used till only two decades before independence. Such stories were circulated during the Sikh period by interested people to make the masses feel that the mosque was declared unfit for prayers even when it was constructed, and, therefore, its use as a granary did not amount to desecration.

In Jahangir's reign there lived in Kashmir two brothers, Malik Haidar and Malik Ali, who descended[12] from a noble family. Their ancestor Malik Muhammad Naji was the minister of Sultan Husain Shah Chak of Kashmir. Malik Haidar wrote a "History of Kashmir" also. These brothers were greatly favoured by Noor Jahan.

Once in the reign of Jahangir the Jami Masjid at Srinagar was destroyed by fire. Malik Hasan, the father of these two brothers, was accused of having done this along with other leading Shi'ahs. It may not be irrelevant to point out here that Shi'ah-Sunni controversy has always been very acute in Kashmir.

This charge perturbed this family very much. Noor Jahan advised

11. *Kashir*, Vol. II, p. 516.
12. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 258.

them to rebuild it at their own expense. They did it in 1029/1619. This pacified the opponents. The Jami Masjid was originally built by Sultan Sikandar, a ruler of Kashmir. Malik Ali conquered Kishtwar, a hilly district east of Kashmir, for Jahangir in 1030/1620. This is the fascinating story of the interest taken by the imperial couple in the charming and enchanting Kashmir. Besides enjoying its beauty Jahangir attended to the welfare of its people.

He strictly prohibited the strangulation of daughters at birth. In Rajauri in 1620, he stopped[13] the immolation of Muslim women in emulation of their Hindu sisters.

It is positive that Jahangir took such steps under the advice of his able consort, Noor Jahan.

13. *Tuzk*, Vol, II, p. 181, Gladwin, *Jahangir*, p. 92.

Chapter 9

KHUSRAU'S MYSTERIOUS END

The political situation in the Deccan was very critical by the year 1620. Ahmadnagar had a very able defender in the person of Malik Amber. He had made a coalition with Bijapur and Golconda and mustered about sixty thousand troops for the defence of the Deccan. He had recruited the Maratha bands also. He violated the treaty imposed on him by the Mughals only two months earlier. One Mughal post after another was captured within three months of the outbreak of hostilities. A large part of the conquered territory was liberated from the Mughals.[1]

Khan-i-Khanan was repeatedly asking the headquarters for reinforcement. Janangir commissioned his son Khurram (Shah Jahan) many a time to march to the Deccan. But he was reluctant to go. He was afraid of his elder and more popular brother, Khusrau. Any strong party in the Royal Court and camp might rise in his favour. Shah Jahan's mind was not clear even about Noor Jahan. Her ambitious nature might find a better instrument to turn the tables on him. Jahangir's delicate health could give way at any moment and Khusrau might be proclaimed Emperor. Shah Jahan was the most suitable person to take up the Deccan campaign. Even his name was enough to restore confidence and morale of the Imperial army. It could create awe and terror in the hearts of the enemy. Shah Jahan would not move to the Deccan without taking Khusrau along with him. To this Jahangir could not agree. It was dangerous and improper to hand over Khusrau to the mercy of his rival. It appears that Noor Jahan had become clear in her mind by that time that Khusrau, who was once supported by his late brother and father, could not prove a fit candidate to deserve her support. Perhaps more imbecile Shahriyar could become a better tool in her hands. Jahangir, at last, gave permission to Shah

1. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 271-2 (Elliot, Vol. VI, pp. 428-9); Gladwin, p. 93; Grant Duff, Vol. I, pp. 73-4.

Jahan to take his brother away to the Deccan along with him. But it could not be without the consent of Noor Jahan. Certainly she wanted the end of one of her rivals at the hands of the other. The gravity of the Deccan situation and inevitability of Shah Jahan's command over the Deccan forces could easily hide the diplomatic designs of the Empress. This permission must have roused the indignation of the common people. Khusrau's admirers and supporters in the Court and Harem must have felt it. This public consternation and Harem lamentation is not preserved by any Eastern or Western authority. Had our familiar and interesting observer Sir Thomas Roe prolonged his stay in the Mughal Court, he would have positively recorded them. Shah Jahan (Prince Khurram) paid a visit to his imperial father at Lahore. He took leave of him. They were not destined to meet again.

The prince marched at the head of his armies from Lahore to the Deccan. Khusrau was also being taken along with his glorious cavalcade.

Shah Jahan met with success in the Deccan campaigns. The news of his success was received with jubilations in the camp and the country.[2] Afzal Khan, the Dewan of Khurram, brought the news of his master's military attainments to the imperial court. He was rewarded with a dress of honour, an elephant, an ink pot and a jewelled pen. Some other captains and nobles were also honoured. Khurram himself received a precious ruby plume (کلغی لعلی) and a horse named Rum Ratan, sent to Jahangir as a present by the Shah of Persia.

Amidst the echoes of these victories and festivities the news of Khusrau's death at Burhanpur was announced.

In April 1621 Shahriyar was married to Ladli Begum and very high ranks and rewards were showered on him. It was a serious and dangerous development for Shah Jahan (Khurram). In August 1621 Jhangir's health took a serious turn and he fell ill. This news disturbed Khurram in the far-off Burhanpur, and he appears to have taken a step against the life of his captive rival, Khusrau. Jahangir himself records in "Tuzk" that according to a report from

2. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, pp. 206-8, 228.

Khurram, on the 20th of Bahman, Khusrau[3] died of colic pain.

Mr. Beveridge[4] has discussed this event in one of his articles. He concludes, "There is no evidence worthy of the name that Khusrau was poisoned or strangled." No doubt, we cannot infer anything from the pages of Jahangir and Motamid Khan. The Emperor coud not mention a deed for which the ultimate responsibility lay with him. The other one was a courtier of Shah Jahan. So we cannot expect anything from him.

A very authentic and reliable Western contemporary authority, De Laet,[5] clearly blames Shah Jahan. According to him, the prince took into his confidence Khan-i-Khanan and other important nobles stationed at Burhanpur. He himself departed on a hunting excursion. His slave Raza, who was commissioned to commit the crime, knocked at the door of the bed-room of the royal captive at the dead of night. He pretended that he and his companions had brought the robes of honour and the letter of liberty for him from the Emperor. The prince refused to believe this story and did not open the door. Raza broke open the door and strangled the unarmed prince. His corpse was placed on the bed, and the door was closed. At dawn the loyal and faithful wife of Khusrau, who was a daughter of Khan-i-Azam (Mirza Aziz Koka, foaster-brother of Akbar), entered the bed-room. Having found her husband dead, she filled the whole palace with her shrieks.

Khurram hurriedly returned to the city from the hunting grounds and all the ceremonies and formalities of sorrow were observed, obviously to hide the plot. On the letter for the Royal Court, all the nobles and mansabdars affixed their seals and signatures that the prince died a natural death. But Nuruddin Quli wrote to the Emperor separately a full account of what had actually happened. On receiving the news the Emperor mourned deeply on the death of his son. He wrote most bitterly reprimanding the Umara on neglecting to inform him about the nature of

. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 228. The text of "Tuzk" gives the date as 8th. B. & R. suggestit to be 20th Bahman. This date of 1031 corresponds to 29 January 1622. But this date is not quite sure (see footnote of the above-quoted reference). *Iqbal Nama*, p. 191 :

"سلطان خسرو در بیستم بهمن ماه بعارضهٔ درد قولنج ودیعت حیات سپرد ـ"

4. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1907, p. 599.
5. De Laet's English translation, pp. 198-9.

his son's death.

The Emperor ordered that the dead body of the prince should be exhumed and sent to Allahabad for burial by the side of his mother's grave. The Emperor summoned Khan-i-Azam to condole the death of his son-in-law with him. Prince Bulaki, a son of Khusrau, was placed under his charge, so that proper arrangements for his education might be made. Bulaki was made a commander of ten thousand horse.

This description of De Laet gives very interesting details about the death of the prince. It shows that Khurram's hands were positively soiled with the blood of Khusrau. Jahangir really felt the loss of his son, who was the first fruit of his youth. He sent Khusrau to the Deccan perhaps on Noor Jahan's advice, and under the pressure of the requirement of Khurram in the Deccan.

Khusrau's mausoleum at Allahabad still reminds us of the life of the most pitiable personality of his age, who was feared by Noor Jahan. It is the master stroke of her diplomacy that he was killed at the hands of another more formidable rival. Besides De Laet, there are some European travellers who bear testimony to this fact. Peter Della Valle[6] wrote in 1623 that "Khusro died of a violent death" and Khurram was the murderer. Petermundy[7] wrote in 1632 and confirmed the above view that the prince who "was much beloved of the people while living, and as much lamented being dead" was killed by his brother. Terry[8] asserts that Khurram "strangled the most galant prince, his brother." Palsart[9] wrote in 1627 : "Sultan Khusrau was assassinated by his brother Sultan Khurram in the year 1621." Sarkar[10] describes that Aurangzeb, in one of his letters to Shah Jahan during his captivity, reminds him of his murder of Khusrau.

Among later Mughal historians Khawafi Khan[11] holds Shah Jahan responsible for Khusrau's murder. Beale[12] states on the authority of *Maathir-i-Qutub Shahi* that a man Raza by name strangled Khusrau at the orders of Khurram.

6. Della Valle, Vol. I, p. 58.
7. *Travels*, Vol. II, pp. 104-5.
8. *Travels*, p. 412.
9. Palsart, p. 18.
10. Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 15ɔ.
11. Khawafi Khan, Vol. I.
12. *Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, p. 220.

Chapter 10

NOOR JAHAN AND PRINCE KHURRAM

The history of Noor Jahan's relations with Khurram, her step-son, is of immense importance and interest in the annals of Mughal India. It is the history of relations between an ambitious woman, who wanted political domination at all costs, and a young intelligent politician prince who could not become a tool in the hands of others. He wanted to rule as well as reign. In this chapter the clash between these two great personalities will be critically discussed.

The Birth and the Early Life of the Prince. Khurram was born on 5 January 1592 (30 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1000) in the Lahore Fort, in the thirty-sixth year of his grandfather Akbar's reign.[1] His mother was the Rathor Rajput Princess Man Mati (also known as Jagat Gosain). She was the daughter of Mota Raja Uday Singh of Jodhpur and was married to Salim in 1586. He was put under the care and patronage of Ruqiah Sultan Begum the childless wife of Akbar. She belonged to the Royal Taimurid family and was a daughter of Prince Hindal. He received education according to the practice of the Mughal Royal House. One of his teachers was Shaikh Abul Khayr,[2] brother of Abul Fazl.

The parental care of Akbar and Ruqiah Sultan Begum and education under the eminent scholars of the age appear to have quickened the intelligence and developed his qualities of head and heart. Unlike his father, his genius was more practical than contemplative. It was perhaps the influence of the Rajput blood which he inherited from his mother. He also received regular military training. The role of Khurram on the eve of his grandfather's death in October 1605, when he was only thirteen years old, and when the discontented conspirators were hatching seditious and wicked schemes to place Khusrau on the throne in place of

1. *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, p. 921; Abdul Hamid, Vol. I, p. 16; Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 6; *Tuzk* (R. and B.) Vol. I, p. 19 (Jahangir puts the date of birth in 999 A.H. which is clearly an oversight).

2. *Akbar Nama*, Vol. III, p. 922.

Salim[3] was very remarkable and depict the signs of his future greatness as a statesman.

Khurram's Role during Khusrau's Rebellion. In 1606 Khusrau rebelled against his father. He left Agra on the evening of 6 April under the pretext of visiting Akbar's tomb and made his way to the Punjab. Jahangir sent Shaikh Farid Bukhari to pursue him. Shortly after this he decided to proceed to the Punjab personally. In Agra he left Khurram[4] at the helm of affairs with a band of experienced nobles to help him.

This was the first occasion when the teen-aged Khurram got the chance of coming into direct contact with administration. The father gave him the reins of Government in supersession of his elder brother, Parvez, who was senior to him by two years. However nominal the nature of this charge had been, due to the fact that many experienced nobles such as Islam Khan and Mirza Ghiath Tehrani were there, it roused the ambitions of the young prince.

Khusrau's rebellion was subdued within less than a month. Jahangir entered Lahore on 9 May 1606. He stayed here for the next eleven months. He ordered Khurram to come with his grandmother, Maryam Zamani, and other ladies to Lahore.

It was here in Lahore, the city of his birth, that Khurram received on 21 March 1607, at the age of fifteen, his first *Mansab* (rank) of 8000 Zat and 5000 Sawar, together with a Tuman-tugh,[5] a flag and drums, and also a *jagir*. About a week later he was betrothed to Arjumand Bano Begum,[6] the daughter of Itiqad Khan (the future Asif Khan). Jahangir appears to have been in a jovial mood those days. He celebrated the betrothal ceremony of Parvez with the daughter of Murad, also with great pomp and show.

After returning from Kabul the Emperor assigned to Khurram a *jagir* in Ujjain.

Khusrau was taken to Kabul along with the royal cavalcade. The vigilance on him was slackened there. Some irresponsible

3. Ibid., pp. 1258-62; *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 322.

4. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 9; *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, pp. 51-4.

5. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 87; Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 33 (Kamboh says that the prince got the custody of royal seal and Hisar Firoza as *jagir*, the distinctions enjoyed only by heirs apparent to the throne). See also *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 133.

6. Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 34.

young men such as Sharif Khan (son of Mirza Ghiath and a brother of Noor Jahan), Noor-ud-Din and Itibar Khan hatched a conspiracy to place Khusrau on the throne after murdering the Emperor. About 400 persons joined them. The plot might have succeeded, but luckily one of the party made a clear confession of it to Khwaja Wais, the Dewan of Prince Khurram. Consequently, the prince came to know of the plot and he promptly apprised the Emperor of it. The three ring leaders were apprehended and punished. Khusrau was ordered to be blinded.[7] The timely discovery of the plot through Khurram's own officer added to his glory. He stood higher than ever in the estimation of his father.

Khurram's Life from 1607 to 1611. After the suppression of the conspiracy the Emperor set out from Kabul. The Imperial cavalcade reached Lahore on 23 November 1607. After a stay of about six months at Lahore the journey to Agra was resumed. The Emperor entered the capital on 12 March 1608. Khurram was now a stripling of sixteen years. It was essential to provide for him a separate household. But the Emperor did not like to keep him away from himself. In the fort of Agra near the Royal apartments there was the house of Muhammad Muqim[8] (styled Wazir Khan). It was assigned to the prince.

On 7 September 1609, Prince Khurram was given a ruby with two pearls worth about 40,000 rupees.[9]

In January 1610, Khurram was betrothed to the daughter of Mirza Muzaffar Husain Safavi, a lineal descendant of Shah Ismail of Persia. The marriage was solemnised with great pomp and show on 29 October 1610.[10]

The problem that has vexed[11] the historians is as to why Jahangir arranged Khurram's marriage with the daughter of Mirza Muzaffar Husain, when the prince was already engaged to Arjumand Bano. The only explanation to this riddle is the participation of some members of Arjumand's family in the pro-Khusrau conspiracies as it has been discussed in detail in another chapter.

The unfortunate circumstances led to the death of her uncle Mirza Sharif and the imprisonment of Mirza Ghiath.[11] Her aunt,

7. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 122-3; *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 28-30.
8. Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 35.
9. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 156.
10. Ibid., p. 180; Kamboh, Vol. I, pp. 36-7; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 46.
11. B.P. Saksena, p. 11.

Mehrun-Nisa, lost her husband and liberty due to similar reasons. Arjumand's father Mirza Abul Hasan Itiqad Khan (Asif Khan of the later period) and other relatives were carrying on with their duties silently avoiding any suspicion.

In 1611, a happy and auspicious change took place in the fortune of this family. Mehrun-Nisa who was serving as a maid-servant on the staff of Salima Sultan, the dowager empress, happened to have impressed the Emperor so much by her ability and beauty that he decided to marry her. As explained in some other chapter, this eventful marriage[13] was solemnised on 25 May 1611.

Mehrun-Nisa (now styled as Noor Mahal by the Emperor) began to spread her influence to every nook and corner of the State slowly but steadily. She found that the most influential prince who was dearly loved and relied upon by the father was Prince Khurram. He was a smart and intelligent statesman. Noor Jahan wanted to impress upon him that his future rise now depended on her support. She had him promoted to the rank of 12,000 Zat and 5000 Sawar on 27, March 1612. In order to win over the prince and organise a ruling junta in the State, she decided to solemnise Khurram's marriage[14] with her niece Arjumand Bano, to whom he was betrothed in 1607.

Arjumand so much impressed the prince that he became immensely attached to her. His other wives, one the Iranian princess and the other a grand-daughter[15] of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, could not eclipse her.

From 1611 starts the period of complete accord and perfect friendship between Prince Khurram and the Empress, Noor Jahan. The prince rose into prominence by the good-will[16] of his father and the favour of his step-mother. He totally eclipsed Pervez.

The Mewar Campaign Very soon Khurram got the chance of showing his merits in the Mewar campaign. Of all the Rajput States Mewar was one which did not bow to the Mughals despite their overwhelming armies. Akbar could only cripple it and not destroy it. Jahangir had tried many generals including Prince Pervez in

12. De Laet, p. 178.

13. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 54-7.

14 *Tuzk* (R. & B.) Vol. I, pp. 224-5; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 67; Kamboh, Vlo. I, pp. 42-3.

15. Abdul Hamid Vol. I, p. 391.

16. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 256.

Mewar, but their efforts met with little success. In 1613 Khan-i-Azam Aziz Kokah was sent. Like others he also could not succeed. Jahangir personally moved to Ajmer. Early in 1614, Prince Khurram was despatched to help Khan-i-Azam. Having reached the scene of action the prince found it impossible to pull together with Aziz Kokah.[17] He was very much irritated at the dilatory tactics of his senior. He complained against him to the Emperor, who sent Ibrahim to impress upon the Khan the need for loyalty. But the Khan did not change his behaviour. Prince Khurram was so active and vigilant in the matter of arresting the foster-brother of his grandfather. He wanted to avail of the opportunity for brushing aside a staunch supporter and father-in-law of Khusrau. This is the first indication of the aggressive temperament of the ambitious Khurram. He, however, succeeded in reducing the Rana to submission. Karan Singh, the son of Rana Amar Singh, was to attend the Royal Court.

The subjugation of Mewar enhanced the prestige of Khurram. By his gracious treatment, he was successful in getting round him a chosen band of devotees. They were ready to die for him in thick and thin. Khurram's success in Rajputana resulted in an increase in his rank. He was raised to 15,000 Zat and 8000 Sawar.[18] He was in a more advantageous position. The party recently organised by Noor Jahan was at his back. Meanwhile another opportunity arose for Khurram's display of ability. The officers at the helm of the Deccan affairs were disappointing him. The rank of Khurram was increased to 20,000 Zat and 10,000 Sawar. Pervez was removed from the Deccan on grounds of incompetency and was transferred to Allahabad. Khurram was appointed to head the Deccan armies.

This was the first master stroke of policy on the part of Noor Jahan to condemn the rival of her candidate, Prince Khurram, the son-in-law of her brother. Pervez was never properly backed by the Centre. He was merely a nominal commander. The real power vested in the officers who took him lightly. Had he been given the same chance and patronage as was extended to Khurram, he could also do well in the Deccan.

Noor Jahan was after her own gain. She was patronising Khurram to bring him under her obligation. She wanted him to depend on her completely. But the clever and crafty Khurram, while

17 *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, pp. 257-8. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 76.
18 *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 288.

utilising her favours on the one hand, he was, on the other hand, creating a strong party of friends and favourites in the Royal court and Camp. Such people were ready to sink or swim with him. In the Rajputana campaigns, as it has been pointed out, he won a large number of friends, through sheer affectionate treatment.

About that time Abdullah Khan Feroz Jang was accused of certain misdemeanours. He was called from Gujrat. He was so much mentally perturbed that he started on foot for Ajmer. Having arrived there he found in Khurram a sympathetic supporter. He interceded[19] with his father on Abdullah's behalf. His fault was forgiven. He was ordered to accompany his benefactor to the Deccan. The prince was really fortunate in having such an experienced officer in his service when he was going to an unfamiliar and unfriendly region.

Before his departure, the prince paraded the pick of his soldiers before the Emperor. Jahangir bestowed upon him the title of Shah.[20] This was a unique honour that had never been showered upon any Mughal prince.

Shah Jahan and the Deccan Campaign. On 6 October 1616, Khurram, accompanied by loyal and experienced officers and the fervent prayers of his father, left Ajmer for the Deccan.[21] On the way Rana Amar[22] Singh met him placing at his disposal a contingent of 1500 chosen horsemen under Prince Karan. On reaching the banks of the Narbada he was welcomed by the Deccan officers including Khan-i-Khanan, Khan Jahan and Mahabat Khan. The prince went straight to Burhanpur and reached there on 6 March 1617.[23] Meanwhile the Emperor arrived at Mandu.

The arrival in the Deccan of Prince Khurram changed the political atmosphere. Adil Shah and Malik Ambar were so much frightened that they readily responded to the gesture of peace made by the prince. They forwarded presents worth one million and five hundred thousand rupees. Malik Ambar returned Bala Ghat.[24] He

19 *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, pp. 331 and 335.

20 Ibid., p. 338; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 90

21 *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, pp. 339; *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 9 -100 (Mutamid Khan, the author of *Iqbal Nama*, also accompanied the Prince as Pay-Master, i.e. Bakhshi, with the Mansab of Hazari, robes of honour and the award of an elephant, p. 91).

22 *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 344 , *Iqbal Nama*, p. 93.

23 *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 368.

24 Ibid., p. 380; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 100.

agreed to surrender Ahmadnagar along with some other forts. It was very creditable for Shah Khurram. He won a victory of peace — a great feat of diplomacy. The sheer propaganda of the military strength accompanied by masterly display of diplomacy won for him what the actual use of arms failed to achieve. Mewar disclosed Khurram as a skilful general and the Deccan presented him as a clever statesman. Having placed the newly acquired area under the charge of the Khan-i-Khanan[25] and Shah Nawaz Khan, the prince left for Mandu to meet his father, who was anxiously waiting for him.

Syed Abdullah of Barah was the first to bring the news of the new arrangements in the Royal Court. Drums[26] were beaten to celebrate the occasion.

On 12 October 1617, the prince arrived in the Imperial court. After he had performed the due rites of salutation, the Emperor called him and with "uncontrolled delight" "held him in the embrace of affection." The prince was given a seat near the throne and unprecedented honours were showered on him. He received the rank of 30,000 Zat and 20,000 Sawar along with the title of Shah Jahan. To celebrate the occasion, Noor Jahan organised a magnificent feast in his honour.[27] Presents worth thousands of rupees were submitted to the Emperor by the prince, his officers and the envoys of the Deccan rulers. Shah Jahan gave to Noor Jahan presents worth 200,000. Thus we find that it was a period of close association and mutual reliance between the Empress and the heir apparent. The title of Shah Jahan made it clear to everybody that the prince was decidedly their future sovereign.

Shah Jahan in Gujrat along with the Emperor. Having solved the Deccan problem the Emperor decided to make a tour of Gujrat. Noor Jahan and Shah Jahan accompanied him. They travelled leisurely. They reached Ahmadabad on 5 January 1618, visiting Dhar and Cambay on the way. In appreciation of the success of the prince in the Deccan, Gujrat was assigned to him.[28]

The sojourn in Gujrat did not, however, prove congenial. The suffocating heat and dust of the country affected adversely the

25. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 393; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 102.
26. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, p. 380.
27. Ibid., pp. 394-7.
28. Ibid., p. 424 ; Vol. II, p. 261.

health of the prince and the Emperor. Both of them fell ill with fever in May 1618. But they could not leave Gujrat before the end of the rainy season. So they started for Agra on September 1618. Passing through Malwa they arrived in the vicinity of Agra about the beginning of January 1619.

Shah Jahan and the Emperor at Sikri. As Agra was still infested with plague, Jahangir decided to stay at Fatehpur Sikri.[30] During their stay at Sikri, once Jahangir took the prince round the palaces and discussed with him in detail the architecture of the buildings constructed by Akbar.

Death of Jagat Gosain. On Friday, 8 April 1619, Shah Jahan's mother Jagat Gosain died. Next day the Emperor went to condole with the prince and took him to his palace.[31]

Journey to Kashmir. In October 1619, the Emperor left for Kashmir. As usual the journey was slow and easy. They reached Srinagar on 20 March 1620.

The Deccan Problem Revived. The much-trumpeted victory of Shah Jahan in the Deccan was in reality a hollow truce. There was no stability in the terms obtained from the Nizam Shahi and the Adil Shahi rulers. When the Emperor was away in Kashmir along with his valiant son, there was a golden opportunity for them to recover their lost prestige and possessions. Malik Ambar organised another anti-Mughal front. He was successful in securing the co-operation of the other two powers against the common foe. The Qutub Shahis offered money and the Adil Shahis provided the soldiers. Malik Ambar mustered an army 50,000 strong. He organised light Maratha cavalry to harass the enemy with their guerilla tactics. The imperialists were soon driven out of Bala Ghat and Payin Ghat. Ahmednagar and Burhanpur were closely invested by the Deccanis. Khan-i-Khanan[32] was in miserable plight. He sent pathetic appeals to the Court for help. When the reports were placed before the Emperor, his heart was greatly moved at the applications of his *Ataliq* (tutor), who was so tenderly brought up by his father. He decided to send an army to the Deccan. Who was to lead

29. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 14. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 115.

30. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 123.

31. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 84. The news of her death reached the Emperor when he was staying at Noor Manzil, a garden near Agra, which got its name after those of the Emperor and the Empress.

32. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, pp. 155-6.

the campaign? The only man whom Jahangir could choose was Shah Jahan. The father showed him the despatches received from Khan-i-Khanan. He agreed to undertake the task.

Shah Jahan's Apprehensions. This time Shah Jahan was not willing to move unconditionally. Although apparently he was honoured, yet the signs of disruption were visible in the party that had supported him for a long time. The failing health of Jahangir, the renewed mild treatment[33] of Khusrau, the rumours[34] of his alliance with Noor Jahan made Shan Jahan cautious and careful. Noor Jahan had come to the conclusion, after long association with Shah Jahan, that he would not become a tool in her hands. He was gifted with the ability to rule and command. He had made a large number of nobles to look upon him as their future sovereign. Noor Jahan realised that there was no room for two equally ambitious and talented personalities—Noor Jahan and Shah Jahan. The issue was clear. Noor Jahan must either retire from public life immediately after the death of Jahangir or support some other prince to succeed the Emperor. As Sir Thomas Roe[35] records, there was a popular rumour current as early as 1616-7 that Noor Jahan proposed to marry her daughter to Khusrau and support his candidature to the throne against Khurram.

With this mental background, Shah Jahan asked his father to place Khusrau under his control as the only condition for his marching against the Deccan. Shah Jahan wanted to deprive Noor Jahan of a popular prince to serve as her candidate to the throne. Noor Jahan would have pondered over it a little. It was a good game to do away with one claimant to the throne through the other. The end of Khusrau under Khurram's charge was bound to make him unpopular among the admirers of the former. The absence of Khurram in the far-off Deccan could provide an opportunity to the Empress to search for some such prince as could easily become her tool like Jahangir himself. Perhaps she thought that there was very little chance of Khurram's success in the campaign; and his failure would make him unpopular among the nobility and common people and discredited in the estimation

33. Ibid., p. 107.
34. Della Valle, Vol. I, pp. 56-7; Roe, pp. 369 and 373.
35. Roe, pp. 369 and 373.

of the Emperor. Shah Jahan was permitted to take Khusrau with him. It appears that Jahangir must have been unwilling to hand over Khusrau to the tender mercy of his rival. It seems to be the decision of Noor Jahan, who prevailed upon the Emperor to allow this arrangement. The gravity of the Deccan situation pressed Jahangir to comply with Shah Jahan's demand.[36] The Emperor also started for Agra.

Shah Jahan's Departure for the Deccan. At Lahore the prince took leave of his father not to meet him again. The campaign was quite tough. But Shah Jahan manoeuvred to tackle the situation. The Maratha guerillas were faced very bravely and carefully. When Malik Ambar found that it was impossible for him to face the Mughal odds he decided to submit. Neither the Mughals could relinquish their claim on the Deccan, nor could the Deccanis be expected to accept Mughal domination without a severe struggle. Shah Jahan was, however, successful in bringing about a settlement of the Deccan problem within about six months. It added to his dignity and prestige. It could not, however, be expected to be a peace of everlasting nature.

The terms of the peace treaty were[37]:

(1) The Imperial territory seized by the Deccanis during the previous two years, along with fourteen Kos of the adjoining territory, was to be handed over to the Mughals.

(2) Fifty lakhs of rupees were to be paid by the three Deccan states as tribute.

Shah Jahan's Dewan Afzal Khan conveyed[38] the news of success to the Emperor. He was rewarded with a robe of honour, an elephant, an inkpot and a jewelled pen. The officers of the Deccan army received promotion and robes of honour. The prince himself was honoured with the gift of a precious ruby plume and a horse named Rum Ratan. Both these gifts had been received by the Emperor from the Shah of Persia.

As compared with the jubilations on the occasion of his first success in the Deccan the response of the Emperor on the second occasion was a colder one. No drums were beaten and there was

36. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 176. Motamid Khan, the author of *Iqbal Nama*, also accompanied the prince as his Bakhshi.)

37. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, pp. 190-1, 206-8; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 182-4; Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 121.

38. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II, pp. 208, 228.

no State banquet. It may be due to the failing health of the Emperor or to the influence of Noor Jahan.

The next few months were spent by the prince in the Deccan, consolidating his conquests and reorganising the administrative machinery. In fact, he was consolidating his own power and position against Noor Jahan, whom he had started to count as his enemy. In August 1621, he received the news of Jahangir's serious illness. As a pecautionary measure he put his elder brother Khusrau to death at Burhanpur. It was announced that he died of colic pain.[39]

Although Jahangir[40] does not appear to have been moved by the death of Khusrau, yet Noor Jahan must have utilised the opportunity to condemn Shah Jahan in the estimation of his father. The devotion exhibited by the people, after the death of Khusrau, to his grave and memory (described even by a pro-Shah Jahan historian, Kamboh) shows that a group of the older nobility and the masses had started hating Shah Jahan. Noor Jahan wanted to exploit the situation in favour of her new protege, Prince Shahriyar. He was a weak and good-for-nothing type of a young man. He was born of a slave-girl. This made him unpopular, no doubt. He could not, therefore, be a fit candidate. But the docile nature and imbecile character of the prince marked him out as the proper tool for the crafty and ambitious lady. She secured for him the Mansab of 8000 Zat and 4000 Sawar, on the auspicious occasion of the celebration of the sixteenth year of the Imperial accession on 10 March 16.1. In April 16 1, she solemnised his marriage[41] with Ladli Begum, her daughter from Sher Afgan. The betrothal ceremony had already taken place[42] in December 1620.

The Creation of the Gulf. By the year 1621 there were no signs of an open hostility towards Shah Jahan. Jahangir did not suspect him. Noor Jahan apparently did nothing to give Shah Jahan cause of complaint. The war of nerves was, of course, going on. It was Shah Jahan who openly started the struggle. He believed in open and direct conflict. In the case of Khusrau he executed his

39. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 228; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 19¹. See for detailed description Kamboh, Vol. I, pp. 124-5. He defends the action of Shah Jahan but openly admits the murder having been done at his instance.

40. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 199.

41. Ibid., p. 202.

42. Ibid., pp. 187-8.

plan without hesitation. Ladli Begum's betrothal with Shahriyar in December 1620 and showering of awards and Mansabs on him in 1621 led him to believe rightly that Noor Jahan had ceased to be his friend and supporter. Like a cautious politician he became suspicious and careful of her. In 1621, Noor Jahan's mother[43] died and in January 1622 her father Itimad-ud-Daula[44] also breathed his last. The ruling Junta, organised by Noor Jahan in 1511, broke up. Henceforth Noor Jahan and Shahriyar were one party and Shah Jahan headed the other. Asif Khan, the brother of Noor Jahan, secretly worked for Shah Jahan. He did not oppose his sister openly till the death of Jahangir.

The Qandhar Problem. In 1622, Shah Abbas of Persia besieged Qandhar.[45] Noor Jahan got an opportunity to land Shah Jahan in trouble. He was ordered to lead an expedition for the relief of Qandhar. This decision was a multi-edged weapon. If he refused to leave the Deccan, he was to be condemned as a rebel, guilty of insubordination—a safe pretext to crush him for ever. If he left the Deccan for Qandhar, he would be deprived of a very strong centre, where he had gathered round him a band of loyal nobles, ready to sink or swim with him, with whose help he could easily fight a war of succession. He could also get help from the Deccan rulers. The Qandhar expedition was almost a hopeless enterprise. It could drag very long with very little hope of success. Such an expedition could ruin the prestige and reputation of the prince. If during Khurram's absence in the dull and dreary hills of Qandhar province, the Emperor died, Shahriyar could easily be hailed as the future sovereign. The prince was on the horns of a dilemma

Shah Jahan forwarded his camp equipage from Burhanpur on 24 March 1622. Soon after this he himself left. But he did not proceed beyond Mandu. He proposed[46] that before he marched to Qandhar he should be given absolute charge of the army; the Punjab placed under his sway; the fort of Ranthambhor given to him for the residence of his family. He wanted to stay at Mandu till the expiry of the rainy season, and then to march to Qandhar.

The contemporary chroniclers are silent on the reasons

43. Ibid., p. 216.
44. Ibid., p. 222.
45. Ibid., p. 233.
46. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, pp. 233-4; Gladwin, p. 57.

prompting Shah Jahan to adopt this attitude. But it is easy to make a conjecture. In order to check the possible designs of the ambitious Empress, such safeguards were essential. With all his cleverness and diplomacy, Shah Jahan could not calculate that Noor Jahan was the last person to be taken in by his proposals. She could interpret them to the Emperor as arising out of seditious designs. For the last few years the prince had been a sort of a deputy sovereign. His vanity, ambition and ability were known to all. He could be dubbed before the King as a source of danger to the stability of the State. If Sir Thomas Roe is to be believed, Jahangir had grown suspicious of Shah Jahan's powers as early as 1617.

Clash at Dholpur. Shah Jahan was still hesitating to comply with the Imperial mandate. Meanwhile a very trifling incident took place—an incident the like of which sometimes makes the matters worse, and quickens the outburst of long pent-up feelings and patience.

Sometimes back Shah Jahan had asked for the grant of the Pargana of Dholpur as a *jagir*. Anticipating the acceptance of the request, a shortwhile after this, he sent a body of men under Darya Khan, an Afghan general, to take charge of the place. Meanwhile Noor Jahan secured the Pargana for Shahriyar and Shariful-Mulk was appointed as its faujdar. When Darya Khan reached Dholpur, he was opposed by Sharif. A clash ensued. Many soldiers were killed on both sides, and Sharif was wounded in the eye.[47]

The Angry Emperor Reprimands the Son. Noor Jahan exploited the incident. She convinced Jahangir very skilfully that Shah Jahan did not deserve the favours bestowed upon him. The Emperor reprimanded him severely and warned him to behave properly. He was commanded to send his officers and troops at once to the North.

Another proof of Noor Jahan's exploitation of the situation is

47. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II, pp. 235-6; *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 193-4. Note the angry tone of Jahangir (*Tuzk*, Text, p. 346) :

"فرمان شد که بعد ازین ضبط احوال خود اموده قدم از جادهٔ معقول و شاهراه ادب بیرون نه نهد - و بمحال جاگیر خود که از دیوان اعلیٰ تنخواه یافته خرسند باشد - و زنهار ارادهٔ آمدن بملازمت ننماید و جمعی از بندها که بجهت یورش قندهار طلب شده زود روانهٔ درگاه والا سازد - اگر خلاف حکم بظهور رسید ندامت خواهد کشید -"

the promotion of Shahriyar to the rank of 12000 Zat and 8000 Sawar. He was appointed the commander of the Qandhar Expedition, with Mirza Rustam as his guardian and actual leader. The Mirza was sent along with Itiqad Khan to Lahore with rupees 100,000[48] as advance of pay to assist the military preparations. Next, Shah Jehan's *jagir* in the North was transferred to Shahriyar and he was told to choose[49] *jagir* of equal value in the South. Motamid Khan says that it was Noor Jahan who initiated such orders ; the Emperor did not want to go to that length. But it should not be forgotten that all the Imperial decisions of that period were inspired by the Empress. The aim of this mischievous decision was to creat trouble for Shah Jahan. If he disobeyed, he could be branded as a rebel. If he exchanged the *jagirs* of Hisar and Doab for *jagirs* in the South, he could be deprived of them also very easily in the long run. The Emperor was repeatedly writing him to send his troops for the Qandhar campaign.

The turn of events alarmed Shah Jahan. He sincerely wanted a patch-up with the Emperor. He was against Noor Jahan and hated her, but he could not afford to pick up a quarrel with his father. He sent his Dewan, Allami Afzal Khan, to the Imperial Court with a humble apologetic letter. Motamid Khan[50] reports that the Begum prevented Afzal Khan from contacting the Emperor. But the Emperor himself notes down that Khurrum sent a petition through Afzal Khan but he refused to listen to him[51] :

"بے اعتدالیہائی خود را لباس معذرت پوشاینده من خود اصلاً
توجه نفرمودم و رونددادم۔"

Shah Nawaz in his *Maathir-ul-Umara*[52] gives the subject-matter of the petition in the account of Afzal Khan. It reads :

"این کنگائس محض خطاست ۔ سہل انگاری چنیں مہم سترگ
غیر از بد اندیشئی دولت ثمره ندارد ۔ امور کلی بر رائے زنان مفوض
نداشته خود بنظر دوربیں بسنجند و حاشا که در ارادت ایں معتقد فتورے
واقع شده باشد و اگر بگفتۂ بیگم جاگیر من تغیری فرمایند بایں وضع میان
دشمنان چگونه بسر برد ۔ التماس آنست که جاگیر مالوه و گجرات نیز

48. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II. pp. 234-7.
49. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 194-6.
50. Ibid., p. 196.
51. *Tuzk* (Syed Ahmad's Text), pp. 347-8.
52. *Maathir*, Vol. I, pp. 146-7.

تغیر شود - و بندر سورت که دروازهٔ مکه است عنایت فرمایند که رفته منزوی شوم-''

During this period the only man who observed prudent silence was Asif Khan. Noor Jahan could neither trust him in her new designs nor could she afford to take an action against him.

Mahabat Khan Won Over by the Empress. Mahabat Khan, a brave general of that age, had been away from the court for the last few years. He was appointed the Governor of Kabul. He hated Noor Jahan, especially Asif Khan. In 1622, Noor Jahan was facing the most dangerous crisis of her career. She had recently lost her parents. The brother could not be relied upon. Shah Jahan had become hostile and rebellious. The Iranians had besieged Qandhar. She had to save the situation and protect her superiority. She thought of winning over Mahabat Khan to her side in order to utilise his talents at such a critical juncture. He was raised to the Mansab[53] of 6000 Zat and 5000 Sawar. He was summoned to the court by a *Farman* bearing the personal seal of the Empress. He refused[54] to attend the court until his enemy Asif Khan was sent away. In order to allay his doubts Noor Jahan sent Asif Khan to Agra under the pretext of bringing the Royal treasury.

Qandhar Conquered by the Persians. Meanwhile the Persians had conquered Qandhar after a siege of forty-five days. Immediately after this Haider Beg, the Persian ambassador, came to the Mughal court with a conciliatory letter from his master. The Shah tried to justify his occupation of Qandhar on the plea that it belonged to the Persians. The letter expressed the pious hope that the friendship would be re-established and the Mughals would not pursue the issue.

Jahangir was irritated at this letter and condemned the Iranians for treachery and meanness.[55]

After the departure of the Persian envoy the Emperor started preparations for an attack on Qandhar. Mirza Rustam was promoted to the rank of 5000. Prince Pervez was sent an urgent message to hasten at once with an army to the court from his

53. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p.240.

54. *Maathir*, Vol. III, p. 388 ; Abdul Hamid, Vol. II, p. 24 (E. & D.), Vol. VII, p. 64); Gladwin, p. 60.

55. Both the letters are found in *Tuzk* (Text of Syed Ahmad), pp. 348-51; R. & B., Vol. II, pp. 240-5.

province Behar.[56]

Unfortunately, the wishes of the Emperor could not be materialised. Despite his preparations he was not destined to embark upon the project of taking Qandhar back from the Persians.

Shah Jahan's Rebellion. A very unfortunate news was received from the South that the best of the sons of the Emperor and the pride of the house of Taimur, who could measure his sword with the Persians, had revolted[57] against his Imperial father due to the suffocating policy of his step-mother, the ambitious Empress Noor Jahan. He had left Mandu with a strong army for the North.

Let us now examine the factors that prompted Shah Jahan to rebel openly. When Afzal Khan returned to his master Shah Jahan, he reported that the domination of the Empress over the Emperor was complete, and that the negotiations had been of no avail. He stated how coldly and scornfully he had been treated. The inactivity and negotiations would not prevent the confiscation of his *Jagir*. Besides this the tone and trend of the Imperial *Farmans*, secret messages and rumours indicated that the matter could be solved only by the sword. A large number of experienced grandees and the pick of the court nobility were either openly with him or sympathised with him.

Shah Jahan suddenly marched from Mandu with his select and seasoned troops. He hoped to catch the Imperial forces unawares. But this did not happen. Noor Jahan rose equal to the occasion. She was eagerly watching the situation. The feudatory Rajput Rajas were summoned to the help of the throne. They generously responded. Khan-i-Azam was granted the Mansab[58] of 7000 Zat and 5000 Sawar. Numerous other chiefs, who were under Royal displeasure, were pardoned and promoted. Mahabat Khan reached the court in January 1623 and became the commander of the Imperial forces. To please Mahabat Khan, Asif Khan was given an appointment in Bengal. This decision not only pleased Mahabat but amounted to the loss to Shah Jahan of a sure and silent supporter at the court. The Emperor himself left Lahore in February 1623 and marched to Delhi at the risk of his delicate health. In order, probably, to gain time, Noor Jahan sent Musawi Khan[59] to

56. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II, p. 245.
57. Ibid., p. 247.
58. *Tuzk* (Syed Ahmad's Text), p. 355.
59. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 249; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 197.

negotiate with the rebel prince. The emissary met the prince at Fatehpur Sikri. The only result of the meeting was that the prince sent his own officer, Qazi Abdul Aziz, to place his demands before the Emperor. The Emperor was so much irritated on meeting the Qazi that he put him into the prison.

Attack on Agra. The rebel found the gates of Fatehpur Sikri closed and properly guarded. His general Raja Bikramajit attacked the unwalled portion of Agra City and plundered it.[60] After this there were a few clashes and skirmishes at Shahpur. He tried guerilla tactics also, while encamping with the main force at Bilochpur. The Imperial army headed by Mahabat Khan with vanguard under Abdullah Khan Feroz Jung reached Qabulpur.

The Battle of Bilochpur. On 29 March 1623, a decisive battle was fought at Bilochpur. The Imperial army numbered 26,000 horse. Abdullah Khan Feroz Jung treacherously deserted to Shah Jahan along with his soldiers. On the way he had tried to weaken the Royal army by accusing many loyal and capable officers of sedition and treachery.[61] Any action against them on the part of Noor Jahan was bound to create a chaos in her ranks. But Noor Jahan escaped the trap and avoided the punitive action against them.

The rebels were thrown into confusion when Raja Bikramajit was shot dead. At night they prudently retreated towards Mandu. The Emperor profusely showered promotions and titles on his followers.[62] But he did not pursue the rebel beyond Fatehpur. The pursuit of Shah Jahan was postponed till the arrival of Pervez with his army. Abdullah Khan's action had created doubts about Asif Khan, Abul Hasan and many others.

Meanwhile Pervez arrived from Behar and met the royal camp at Hinduan. He was received with great honour, and conducted with great pomp and show to the Emperor, who publicly embraced him. In order to set him above Shah Jahan he was given the rank of 40,000 Zat and 30,000 Sawar. The army was sent to pursue Shah Jahan nominally headed by Pervez and actually commanded by Mahabat Khan. Another army was sent under the nominal command of Dawar Bukhsh son of Khusrau. He was raised to

60. *Tuzk* (R. and B), Vol. II, pp. 249-50; Della Valle, p. 121.

61. *Tuzk* (Syed's Text), pp. 355-6. See *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 194-200, for the events of Shah Jahan's rebellion.

62. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II, pp. 253-6, 259; *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 203-4; Glapwin, pp. 64-5.

8000 Zat and 3000 Sawar. He was appointed Governor of Gujrat with his maternal grandfather Khan-i-Azam as his guardian.[63] The Emperor moved to Ajmer on 9 May 1623, to watch the events from closer quarters.

This state of affairs sorely afflicted the heart of Jahangir. He records with great pathos his sentiments on these sad events:

از تربیت ها و مرحمت ها که در حق او بظهور آمده می توانم گفت
که تا حال هیچ بادشاهی بفرزند خود این قدر عنایت نکرده باشد۔
آنچه پدر بزرگوارم به برادران من لطف نموده بودند من بنوکران او
مرحمت فرمودم و صاحب خطاب و علم و نقاره ساختم۔۔۔۔ از کدام
الم خود نویسم از کوفت و ضعف در چنین هوائے گرم که بمزاج من
نهایت ناسازگاری دارد۔ سواری و تردد باید کرد۔ و باین حال بر سر
چنین ناخلفی باید رفت۔ بسیارے از بنده ها را که سالهائے دراز تربیت
کرده بمرتبه امارت رسانیده که امروز بایستی بجنگ اوزبک یا قزلباش
بکار آیند۔ به شومیٔ او سیاست فرموده بدست خود ضائع ساخت۔

After his defeat near Bilochpur Shah Jahan retreated to the South. In the way he plundered Ambar.[64] He reached Mandu on 17 August 1623. On hearing of his hot pursuit by Prince Pervez and Mahabat Khan, he marched to Burhanpur the very next day. The Imperial army overtook him on the way. Before coming to grips Mahabat Khan enticed away[65] many important supporters of the rebel. Shah Jahan had to flee across the Narbada.

As a last resort he tried to make Narbada the line against the Imperialists. He withdrew all the boats from the right bank of the river. Bairam Beg was appointed to keep a strict vigil on the banks and the ferries. At this juncture a messenger of Khan-i-Khanan going to Mahabat Khan with his letter was captured and brought before the prince. It perturbed him very much and he interned Khan-i-Khanan[66] and his son Darab Khan together with their families.

Shah Jahan now went to Asirgarh. Leaving some of his heavy luggage there he marched to Burhanpur. He sent Rao Ratan Hada to negotiate for peace with Mahabat Khan, who made the release

63. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II, pp. 260-1; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 205.
64. Ojha's *Itihas*, pp. 824-5.
65. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II, p. 271-2; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 209.
66. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. II, p. 274; *Iqbal Nama*, p. 210; *Maathir*, Vol. I, p. 706.

of Khan-i-Khanan[67] a condition for such talks.

Shah Jahan not only released him but asked him to plead for him with the Imperialists. Khan-i-Khanan agreed but later on, instead of keeping up his promise, joined Prince Pervez, who had crossed the Narbada along with his army.

Shah Jahan's Wanderings. This state of affairs unnerved Shah Jahan. He sought a passage to Golkunda territory to Orissa in order to go to Bengal[68] to try his luck there. He reached Bengal safely. Ibrahim Khan, the Governor, refused to join him and died fighting with the rebel army while defending the fort of Raj Mahal.[69] Emboldened by this success Shah Jahan marched forward, occupied Behar[70] and went forward in Oudh up to Jaunpur.

Meanwhile Prince Pervez and Mahabat Khan hurried from the Deccan to the scene of action. Shah Jahan was defeated[71] in an action that ensued. Most of his followers were either slained or dispersed. The prince retreated to Rohtas. The Imperial army made it difficult for him to stay in the East. Accompanied by his sons, Dara and Aurangzeb, and a band of faithful followers, he made his way to the Deccan. He passed through Orissa and Golkunda territory. He entered Malik Ambar's dominion, who received him cordially. An alliance was struck up between the two.

Shah Jahan laid siege to Burhanpur with the help of his new ally. Meanwhile Prince Pervez and Mahabat Khan again reached the Deccan. The prince was compelled to raise the siege and retreat to Rohan Khed.[72]

Shah Jahan's Submission. On the way Shah Jahan fell seriously ill. He was completely unnerved and his pride fully subdued. He was unable to continue the struggle which had disturbed his father very much. He had neither men nor money to help him. No other course was left except to sue for pardon, which was readily granted to him on the following conditions:

(1) Shah Jahan was to send to the Court his sons Dara and Aurangzeb as hostages for his future good conduct.
(2) He was to instruct his officers to surrender the Asirgarh fort

67. Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 134.
68. Ibid., pp. 135-6.
69. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 219-20.
70. Ibid., p. 222.
71. Ibid., pp. 232-4.
72. Ibid., p. 244.

in Khandesh (Deccan) and Rohtas fort in Behar.

Shah Jahan complied[73] with these demands and sent his sons as hostages to the Emperor with presents worth three lakhs of rupees.

Despite this arrangement Shah Jahan was afraid of entering the Imperial territory. He took up residence at Nasak.

Thus ended the rebellion which was the result of the clash between the two ambitious, proud and clever personalities, viz. Shah Jahan and Noor Jahan. It kept the Empire in a troubled state for over three years. This civil war drained the State resources in both men and money. The Qandhar campaign and the expansion in the South were set aside. It lowered the prestige of the Mughals.

This war did not improve Shah Jahan's chances to succession. He suffered reverses and the war ended in his complete ruin. He could not dare to enter the territory which he was destined to rule after about two years only.

This war revealed Noor Jahan's mastery in the art of diplomacy. She successfully used one enemy (Mahabat Khan) against the other (Shah Jahan). She brought forth the neglected Prince Pervez as the most suitable instrument against Shah Jahan; although she never wanted Pervez to become so much popular and powerful as to inherit his ancestral throne. This privilege she wanted to reserve for her son-in-law and protege Shahriyar. Shah Jahan's defeat in the civil war can be credited to Noor Jahan's superior tactics.

The other causes of Shah Jahan's failure are :

(1) Shah Jahan's strategical mistake to march unscrupulously to the North. This rendered it impossible for him to stand at any place during he hurried retreat.

(2) Most of Shah Jahan's supporters were opportunists like Khan-i-Khanan and his son Darab Khan. Such people fought half-heartedly and were ready to desert him, as their aim was merely to fish in the troubled waters.

(3) The loss of trusted commanders like Raja Bikramajit and Raja Bhim weakened him very much.

(4) The resources of the rebel prince were no doubt limited as compared with those of the Imperial Government.

After the civil war Shah Jahan remained in the Deccan till he received the news of the death of his father in the distant Poonch area towards the close of 1627.

73. Ibid., p. 274.

Chapter 11

NOOR JAHAN AND MAHABAT KHAN'S COUP

It was the rebellion of Shah Jahah which compelled Noor Jahan to bring Mahabat Khan to prominence, and to give supreme command of the army to Prince Pervez. Their achievements against Shah Jahan were making them popular and powerful. Meanwhile the health of the Emperor was deteriorating faster than ever. The worry caused by the rebellion of the ablest son was further vexing him. What had Noor Jahan gained so far as the problem of succession was concerned? Her motive was to clear the path for the succession of her protege, Shahriyar. Her fears were not baseless. Had the Emperor died in 1625, Mahabat Khan could easily enthrone Pervez and rule over Mughal India as his vizier. Their dazzling success made Noor Jahan jealous of them. It was partly due to this apprehension that Noor Jahan accepted the apology of Shah Jahan on comparatively lenient terms. Although the health of the Emperor was fast breaking down, the physical and mental vigour of the Empress was unimpaired. The wielding of sovereign power for a long time had strengthened her imperious instinct. Her success against Shah Jahan strengthened her belief in her own diplomatic skill and organising capacity. Her dominant motive was to perpetuate her sway.

Khusrau, the most popular prince, had died in 1622. Khan-i-Azam who could espouse the cause of Dawar Bukhsh,[1] and was recently given prominence during the campaign against Shah Jahan, had died at Ahmedabad in 1624. Shah Jahan, the virtual heir apparent in 1621 was utterly humiliated and distressed. He stood discredited in the estimation of the Emperor and his subjects.

As compared with the situation in 1621, Noor Jahan appeared to have gained her object in 1625. But the irony of circumstances had brought into prominence a comparatively mediocre prince.

1. Dawar Bakhsh was the son of Prince Khusrau from a daughter of Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka.

Till 1623, Pervez was an insignificant and unimportant prince as compared with Khusrau and Shah Jahan. In 1625, Pervez was definitely superior to Shahriyar. He had successfully led the military expeditions against his rebel brother (Shah Jahan). He was born of a duly-wedded Muslim lady of Turkish origin. His mother, Sahib Jamal,[2] was the daughter of Khwaja Hasan, an uncle of Zen Khan Koka. His wife was also a lady of Timurid origin, a daughter of Prince Murad[3] and a grand-daughter of Akbar. He was bound to be helped by the Turkish Central Asian nobility.

Parvez had, therefore, a better claim to the throne as compared with Shahriyar, who was the son of a concubine.[4] While Shahriyar was a lad of twenty years, Pervez was thirty-six possessing greater ability and more experience. Why should he yield to Shahriyar and the Empress to accept perpetual confinement or a bloody grave for him. Mahabat Khan also must have contemplated on these lines. For him, and, as a matter of fact, for the State also, Pervez was a better choice than Shahriyar. The accession of Shahriyar was bound to result in his permanent exclusion from the higher councils of the State. The best course for him was to emancipate Jahangir from petticoat influence and strive for the sucession of Pervez.

The Empress clearly understood the new political developments. So long as Shah Jahan's revolt continued, the services of Mahabat Khan were indispensable. After the conclusion of peace with Shah Jahan the Empress proceeded to undermine Mahabat Khan's power with her usual audacity and diplomatic skill. Her brother Asif Khan, an enemy of Mahabat Khan, who had nothing to gain from the accession of Pervez and who still secretly espoused Shah Jahan's cause, supported her in this venture.

The first step was to separate Mahabat Khan from Pervez and to deprive him of the command of the forces which were nominally under the prince. In September 1625, when the prince and Mahabat Khan were encamping at Sarangpur on their way to Burhanpur, the prince received an Imperial *Farman* through Fidai Khan,[5] transferring Mahabat Khan to the governorship of Bengal and appointing Khan Jahan Lodhi to succeed him as adviser to Parvez.

2. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 18-9, footnote 1.
3. Ibid., p. 78.
4. Ibid., p. 20.
5. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 245 (E. & D., Vol. VI, p. 418); Gladwin, pp. 78-9.

The whole plan was evident to the prince and the general. The prince declared his unwillingness to relieve Mahabat Khan and to receive Khan Jahan Lodhi. This response clearly shows that the apprehensions of the Empress were not unfounded. She had to adopt a sterner attitude. Another *Farman* warned Pervez and called upon him to avoid refractory conduct and to render implicit obedience. If Mahabat Khan was unwilling to go to Bengal he was to return to court and the prince was to stay at Burhanpur. Menawhile Khan Jahan Lodhi had started to take charge of his new appointment. The tone of the Royal mandate frightened Pervez. He did not want to share the fate of Shah Jahan. He yielded and Mahabat Khan agreed to go to Bengal.

Had Pervez shown some audacity to stick to his previous decision, Noor Jahan could send a force against him and his general Mahabat Khan under Khan Jahan Lodhi or Asif Khan. The defeat of Pervez would have completely cleared the path of the Empress. The obedience shown to the Royal *Farman* by Pervez left no other choice for Mahabat Khan but to proceed towards Bengal.

Activities against Mahabat Khan. Having succeeded in her object of separating Mahabat Khan and Pervez, Noor Jahan was not the person to sit idle. The position of Mahabat Khan was greatly weakened after his removal from his previous post. Noor Jahan decided to strike while the iron was hot. She wanted to ruin Mahabat Khan utterly.

Mahabat Khan had just reached Bengal when he was called upon to despatch to the Court the elephants he got in Bengal and Behar, while suppressing Shah Jahan's revolt. He was asked to furnish an account of the sums forfeited to the State after the dismissal of the disloyal *Jagirdars*. A Royal officer named Dast Ghaib[6] was sent to fetch the elephants and to take an account of the disputed money. If the Khan was not to satisfy the Royal agent, he was to get an order of recall to the Court.

Mahabat Khan clearly understood the motive behind this move. It was an insidious attempt[7] on the part of the Empress to

6. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 248.
7- Ibid., p. 252.
"طلب او بتحریک و کار پردازی' آصف خان شده بود - پیش نهاد خاطر ایشان آنکه او راخوار و بے عزت ساخته دست تعرض بناموس و مال و جان او اندازند" -

undermine his fame for honesty. She wanted to get an excuse to punish him for embezzlement. He must have felt shocked at the ingratitude shown to him immediately after he had saved the Empire from a disaster. He understood that his patron Jahangir had become so weak and invalid as to do anything against or for him. He knew that Noor Jahan and Asaf Khan would not stop till they had completely destroyed him.

Mahabat Khan's March with Rajput Soldiers. Mahabat Khan was not, however, a man of weak nature. He could no submit tamely to disgrace. His bold and intrepid spirit could not be satisfied till he had redeemed his honour. He decided to march towards the Imperial Court with four or five thousand Rajput warriors of undoubted fidelity. He had already sent the elephants in question.

The Emperor left Kashmir in September 1625 and arrived at Lahore on 12 October 1625. He started for Kabul in March 1626. The Royal camp was pitched on the bank of the Jhelum, when Mahabat Khan arrived in its vicinity. The appearance of Mahabat Khan along with his Rajput force produced some consternation. But no one bothered to take any precautionary measure. In reply to his intimation of arrival, he was disallowed to attend the Court, till formally summoned. The demand for elephants was repeated.

The Ruling Faction Insults Mahabat Khan. It seems essential to describe an incident which demonstrates clearly the extent of the animosity borne by the ruling faction to Mahabat Khan. He had married his daughter to Burkhurdar,[8] son of Khwaja Umar Naqshbandi. His fault was that he did not obtain the customary Royal permission. The best course would have been to call him to account for this neglect. But the ruling clique was bent upon exploiting this omission for insulting Mahabat Khan. His son-in-law was called into the Court. His hands were bound to his neck and he was remanded to prison. The dowry given to his wife by Mahabat Khan was forfeited to the State.

The poor bridegroom Burkhurdar, who hailed from a respectable Sunni Naqshbandi family of Turkestan, was thus mercilessly insulted merely for the oversight of his father-in-law. This shows how desperate Noor Jahan had become. Such cruel treatment could

8. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 253 (E. & D., Vol. VI. p. 420); Muhammad Hadi (E. & D., Vol. VI, pp. 396-7) ; Khwafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 360 ; *Maathir*, Vol. I; Gladwin p. 79.

not be easily tolerated.

On one side Mahabat Khan was being insulted at every step, on the other, Asaf Khan was heedless of the safety of the King. Motamid Khan also[9] makes the some charge. He was an eye-witness of the event and give a graphic description of Mahabat Khan's camp. This event is described on the basis of his account.

The Royal Camp Crosses the Jhelum. A few days after the arrival of Mahabat Khan at Jhelum the Imperial cortege began to cross the river. Almost all the officers and soldiers went over to the right bank. The treasury and arms had also been transported over the bridge. Asaf Khan and other important nobles had also crossed. The Emperor, his family, Motamid Khan (author of *Iqbal Nama*), Mir Mansur, a few servants and eunuchs alone remained in the camp on the left bank of the river. They intended to cross over the next morning. Mahabat Khan knew that the power of the ruling party rested on their control of the Emperor. If he could exercise control on the Emperor, he would turn the table on them. Ordinarily, it was difficult, if not impossible, to get an access to the Emperor, and to persuade him to shake off the hold of Noor Jahan or her brother. If others could use the Emperor, why should Mahabat Khan not try to seize his person, and play the same game which his enemies had played for fifteen years. Such thoughts led him to stage a *coup de main*.

Mahabat Khan's Coup. Early next morning Mahabat Khan posted two thousand horsemen at the boat bridge. They were not to allow anyone to cross it, and had to set it on fire in the case of an attack. After making this arrangement he advanced to the Imperial camp with a select body. A cry arose in the camp about his arrival. Motamid Khan went out of his camp with sword in hand to see what had happened. Mahabat Khan, whose horse was surrounded by about one hundred armed Rajput footmen, inquired of him about the Emperor. He hastened to the chief entrance and Motamid Khan went into the royal apartment by a side door. Mahabat Khan and his soldiers roamed in the Imperial camp without any hesitation and regard for Imperial etiquette and decorum. Being disturbed by this onslaught the Emperor came out and sat in a *palki* (palanquin) which was in waiting for him. Mahabat Khan advanced respectfully and said, "Having assured myself that escape from the

9. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 253-4.

malice of Asaf Khan is impossible, I have taken this bold step of throwing myself upon your majesty's protection. If I deserve punishment, give the order that I may suffer it in your presence." The camp had by now come under complete control of the Rajput soldiers. The Emperor and his few attendants were in confinement. Although Mahabat Khan was respectful to the Emperor, yet he could never think of such violation of the Royal camp. The Emperor twice laid his hand on the sword, and appeared intent on cutting off Mahabat Khan's head. Mansur Badakhshi twice dissuaded him from this mad venture. He advised the Emperor in Turki, which Mahabat Khan did not understand.

The Emperor was loved by the people and Mahabat Khan apprehended a commotion among them on the slightest suspicion of personal harm to him. Mahabat Khan asked the King to take his usual ride for sport. "So that your slave *i.e.* Mahabat Khan himself] may go out in attendance upon you, and it may appear that this bold step has been taken by your majesty's consent." The Emperor could not "disobey". He did not, however, ride on Mahabat Khan's horse but called for his own steed. He desired to go inside to dress for the hunt and probably to consult the Empress. But Mahabat Khan refused to allow him to go in.

The Emperor moved out on the back of the Imperial stallion, surrounded by Mahabat Khan and his Rajputs. After covering "two arrow shots' distance," Mahabat Khan urged the Emperor to mout an elephant so that the people might see him clearly. The Emperor agreed. In front of the howdah sat one of the most reliable Rajput followers, while two others took their seats behind. Muqarrab Khan, an adherent of the Emperor, got injured in his struggle to get a seat beside his master. The Imperial cup-bearer also mounted to provide essential needs of his master. Meanwhile an Imperial elephant was brought forward by Gajpat Khan and his son. Mahabat Khan suspected an attempt at rescuing the Emperor. So he signalled to his Rajputs and these innocent persons were killed. This incident frightened all those present. The procession reached Mahabat Khan's camp. The Emperor was placed under the strict guard of Mahabat Khan's son.

Noor Jahan's Disappearan e. Mahabat Khan was no doubt a desperate and daring general, but he does not appear to have been a careful diplomat. He secured the person of the Emperor and brought him to his camp, but he did not bother to get hold of the

Queen also who was in the female apartment of the same camp. It was in reaching his camp that he thought of the Queen. He came back to the Imperial camp with the Emperor. But he was disappointed to find that his prey had flown across the river. After this he went to the camp of Shahriyar. He was again disappointed to find him also missing. Chhaju,[10] the grandson of Shajaat Khan, a noble of Akbar's Court, who happened to be present there took him round the camp but Shahriyar could not be found. Mahabat Khan suspected Chhaju's hand in Shahriyar's flight, and got him killed by his Rajput attendants. At night the Emperor was strongly guarded by the Rajputs.

Noor Jahan crossed over the bridge in disguise. Only Jawahir Khan, her chief eunuch, was with her. Although the guards were very strict in forbidding those trying to cross over to the right bank, they appear to have taken not much care about isolated individuals crossing over to the other side. The Empress seems to have disguised herself such that nobody could know her identity. This was the crucial mistake which, in the long run, decided the issue against Mahabat Khan. Had he got hold of the Empress, her daughter and son-in-law also, Noor Jahan must, in distress, have struck a bargain with him. Mahabat Khan would have been appointed vizier and commander-in-chief to share the power and authority with the Empress, on the promise of accepting Shahriyar as the heir apparent. Mahabat Khan would have wreaked his vengeance on Asaf Khan and some other nobles whom he did not like. Asaf Khan might have been transferred to some far-off province like Kabul or Bengal. But this is all speculation which could not be realised due to the shortsightedness and carelessness of Mahabat Khan.

Noor Jahan's Activity on the Right Bank of Jhelum. Having crossed the river Noor Jahan hurried straight to her brother, Asaf Khan. She rebuked him for his slothfulness. She convened a meeting of all the nobles and mansabdars present in the camp. She vociferously upbraided them. She pointed out to them that all that had happened was due to their negligence and improper arrangements. Nobody could imagine these happenings. She added that

10. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 259-60 (E. & D., Vol. VI, pp. 423-4); Khwafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 356.

they must do their best to face this evil.[11] It was unanimously decided that the whole army should cross the river and attack Mahabat Khan's camp.

The Preparations. Mahabat Khan was more powerful than the forces on the other side of the river. His Rajputs were better fighters than those who were travelling along the Royal cavalcade. Moreover, the bridge had been burnt, and to cross the flooded Jhelum, in the presence of a strong and well-posted enemy, was a desperate and difficult action.

Such a clash was against the interests of Mahabat Khan. He could not fight with Noor Jahan and Asaf Khan openly. It would have exposed the real nature of his coup. His aim was to give the impression that the Emperor had willingly accepted his protection to shake off the undesirable influence of the Empress and her family. It was in the best interests of Mahabat Khan to capture Noor Jahan, Asaf Khan, Shahriyar and other persons, and render them harmless. The Emperor tried to dissuade the nobles from a clash. The news of the preparations of Noor Jahan and the nobles infilterated to the left bank of the river. Jahangir realised the folly of the whole venture. With the consent of Mahabat Khan he sent messages through Muqarrab Khan, Sadiq Khan, Mir Mansur and some other reliable persons who were left in his service, to Asaf Khan and other nobles advising them to avoid an armed clash with Mahabat Khan. It would produce nothing but evil and repentance. With what hope and zeal the army could fight when the Emperor was on the other side of the river? It order to authenticate his message and to show that it was without duress the Emperor sent his signet ring through Mir Mansur.[12]

11. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 260. Motamid Khan, the eye-witn ss of the events, gives the speech of Noor Jahan in the following words.

"عمده های دولت را طلب داشته مخاطب و معاتب ساخت که از غفلت
و خام کاری شما کار با ینجا کشید و آنچه در مخیلهٔ هیچ کس نگذشته بود-
بظهور آمد - و در پیش خدا و خلق خجالت زدهٔ کردار خویش گشتید -
اکنون بتدارک آن باید کوشید و در آنچه صلاح دولت و برآمد کار باشد -
باتفاق معروض داشت-"

12. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 260. Motamid Khan, the eye-witness, preserves the text of the message of Jahangir as follows :

فرمودند که "از آب گذشتن و جنگ انداختن محض خطاست- زنهار که
این تدبیر نادرست را نتیجهٔ خام کاری و نارسائی دانسته پیرامون خاطر راه
ندهند که بجز ندامت اثری بران مترتب نخواهد شد و هرگاه من درین
طرف باشم بکدام دل گرمی و بچه امید جنگ میکنند-"

Asaf Khan did not believe in the authenticity of the message. He took it to have been effected by Mahabat Khan. The sense of shame and the enthusiasm created by exhortations of the Empress led the Imperial officers to turn a deaf ear to all such advice. Perhaps they thought that if the proposed attack would not achieve anything, it would at least exonerate them from the blame of cowardice, carelessness and desertion of their master. They could be justified in suspecting the message and even the sending of the signet ring itself as a device of the enemy. They, therefore, remained firm on their resolution to force their master released the next morning.

Fidai Khan's Venture to Rescue the Emperor. In the last hours of the night, an attempt was made by Fidai Khan to rescue the Emperor. Fidai Khan was once a follower of Mahabat Khan, but later on he attached himself to Noor Jahan and had recently risen to prominence. He galloped on to the head of the bridge and found it burnt. In the cover of darkness he resolved to cross along with some two dozen of his followers. They plunged their horses into the river just opposite the Imperial camp. Unfortunately, the current was very violent and it swept away six of the men along with their horses. A few others turned back finding it impossible to go any further. Fidai Khan and seven of his companions left their horses at the mercy of the waves and themselves swam across to the opposite bank to be greeted by enemy swords. The enemy was too vigilant to be deceived like this. The four of the band were killed. The others, including Fidai Khan himself, swam back with the same dash and spirit with which they had crossed it. In the morning they were ready to participate in the ensuing scuffle. But such display of dash and daring was of no avail. It could result only in the loss of men and material.

The Battle of Jhelum. On the morning of Sunday, 9th of March 1629 (21 Jamadi-uth-Thani 1035), great stir and bustle was seen in the camp on the right bank of the river. Noor Jahan herself led the army, which proceeded to cross the river. It was an occasion for Noor Jahan to display her dauntless spirit. She was seated on an elephant with the infant daughter of Shahriyar in her lap. Ladli Begum and the foster-mother of the baby were also in the same howdah. Unfortunately, the ford, which was discovered and recommanded by Ghazi Beg, the superintendent of the boats (مشرف نواره), proved to be one of the worst. It contained many large and deep pools. The result was that before reaching the

middle of the stream chaos and disorder prevailed in the army. Meanwhile Mahabat Khan had arranged his forces in battle array with huge elephants in the front.

Noor Jahan's army was separated into many isolated confused groups. Asaf Khan, Abul Hasan Turbati and Iradat Khan found themselves facing a portion of the bank, where the enemy were very strongly posted. Fidai Khan and Abu Talib (son of Asaf Khan) and a considerable number of people crossed the river at the better fords lower down. At the main ford the water being deep many horses had to swim.

In this turmoil some horsemen succeeded in reaching the bank while others were still in water. The enemy led their elephants towards them. Asaf Khan and Khwaja Abul Hasan were yet in the middle of the river, when the soldiers ahead of them recoiled due to the pressure of the advancing elephant force. In the ensuing panic everybody thought of his personal safety; the officers rushed off in disorder, not knowing what to do.

Motamid Khan and Khwaja Abul Hasan had crossed one branch of the river, and were standing on the brink of the other. Motamid Khan reports that they were much perplexed and paralysed. They were[13] surprisingly pondering at the vicissitudes of fate, and looking towards horsemen, footmen, camels and carriages which were jostling in the middle of the river amidst that chaos. At that time Nadim, an eunuch of Noor Jahan, approached them and said, "The Begum asks if this is the time for delay and irresolution; dash forward boldly, so that the enemy may be repulsed and scattered by your advance."[14]

Motamid Khan and the Khwaja did not wait to reply and plunged into the water. Seven to eight hundred Rajputs stood firmly with war elephants facing them. Some of Noor Jahan's horsemen and footmen reached the bank in a disordered form. The Rajputs

13. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 263. Motamid Khan says:
"من و خواجه ابوالحسن از یک آب گزشته برلب آب دوم ایستاده تماشای نیرنگی تقدیر می کردیم-"

14 Ibid, p. 263. Motamid records the message as below:
ومهد علیا می فرمایند که این چه جائی تامل و توقف است - پائی همت پیش نهید که بمجرد درآمدن شما غنیم منهزم شده راه آوردگی پیش خواهد گرفت -

pushed forward the elephants towards them and their horsemen dashed into the water with their swords. Noor Jahan's soldiers were compelled to flee after much loss of life.

Attack on Noor Jahan's Elephant. In this turmoil even Noor Jahan could not remain immune from attack. In the litter of the Begum's elephant the foster-mother of Shahriyar's daughter (who was Shah Nawaz Khan's daughter) was also seated. An arrow struck her arm.[15] Noor Jahan herself plucked it out. The dresses of the ladies were tinged with blood. As soon as this elephant approached the bank, it received two sword cuts on its trunk. The Queen's four eunuchs, including Jawahar Khan, in charge of the Royal household, and Nadim were killed. The elephant turned its back and ran towards water. The Rajputs followed it, and caused two or three injuries at its back. Several Rajputs plunged into the river with drawn swords. The elephant driver led the wounded beast into deep water. The chasing Rajputs had to return. The elephant, however, swam across to the bank and the Begum went straight to her camp. Motamid Khan and Khwaja Abul Hasan were both with her. The former stood on the bank along with forty horsemen. They were all shooting arrows towards the enemy in order to check their advance to that side. Khwaja Abul Hasan in the meanwhile spurred his horse at full gallop. But the fear and astonishment so puzzled him that he plunged the horse into deep and violent water, with the result that he fell off. He, however, clutched the saddle-bow firmly. The horse dived several times but the Khwaja did not loosen his grasp at the saddle. A Kashmiri boatman came to his rescue, but the horse was drowned. Thus the main attack was disastrously repulsed.

During this clash, nothing is heard about Asaf Khan. Motamid Khan[16] tells that he made his appearance only after the clash was over

15. Motamid Khan says (p. 363) :
"چنین وقت مخمصه تیری بربازوی اتکهٔ دختر شهریار رسید و بیگم خود بدست برآورده بیرون انداخت۔"

It means that the arrow struck her foster-mother. But Khwafi Khan reports that the arrow struck the infant herself (Vol. I, p. 269).

16. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 264. Writing about Asaf Khan Motamid Khan says :
درین وقت آصف خان پیدا شدند و از نیرنگیٔ زمانه وبی راهه رفتن رفیقان و بدنشینیٔ نقش گله آغاز کرده روانه شدند و سخن تمام نشده مجلس تمام شد و هر چند از ایشان بچشم و زبان نشان خواستم اثری ظاهر نشد که بکدام جانب شتافتند۔

and complained about the deception of the fate, vague nature of friends and failure of the plans. He left him without finishing his talk and Motamid Khan could not get any clue of his whereabouts. This was the conduct of the premier noble of the Court, the trusted brother of Noor Jahan and the main enemy of Mahabat Khan.

The Exploits of Fidai Khan. Fidai Khan crossed the river at a better ford with a small band of brave followers. They reached the bank in order and discipline, and attacked the Rajput guards stationed there. They got the upper hand after a brisk fight. They pushed on to the camp of Shahriyar where the Emperor was confined. It was strongly guarded. Fidai Khan stood at the entrance of the camp and shot a valley of arrows inside. Some of them fell near the Emperor. Mukhlis Khan stood before the royal seat and made his body a shield to protect the Emperor. Fidai Khan and his men fought on for some time. Some of them were killed and some wounded. Among those who were killed may be mentioned Syed Muzaffar, Vizier Beg son of Tardi Beg and Atta Ullah. Syed Abdul Ghafoor, a brave young man, was seriously injured. Fidai Khan's horse received four injuries. When Fidai Khan found that he could not succeed in contacting the King, he left the field and went up the river. Next day he joined his family at Rohtas.

Fidai Khan did his best in his own way to rescue the King. But such actions of wanton and unrestrained bravery could not succeed against Mahabat Khan. Fidai Khan, however, appears to be the most impressive personality in the camp of Noor Jahan due, among other things, to his sincerity of actions. Had he been able to contact the Emperor, he would have positively tried to extricate him from the clutches of Mahabat Khan. Fidai Khan's conduct is in sharp contrast to that of Asaf Khan, who could not face a serious crisis that was mainly the result of his own negligence.

Chaos in Noor Jahan's Camp. So far as Noor Jahan is concerned, she failed in her efforts. The nobles lacked capacity to reorganise their forces and continue resistance. They were dispersed and scattered in all directions. Some of them even fled away neglecting defence of the right bank of the river which was to provide women and servants a passage to safe places. Only Motamid Khan and a few others stood at the river bank to prevent the enemy from crossing over to their side.

Asaf Khan Flees to Attock. Asaf Khan, the premier noble of the State, was the person whose cowardice was exposed in this struggle. There is no doubt that he could not expect any mercy from Mahabat Khan. There were hardly two other men in Jahangir's Empire who hated and detested each other so much as Asaf Khan and Mahabat Khan did. When the attack failed, Asaf Khan fled to the fort of Attock along with two or three hundred soldiers, some camp followers and servants. Attock was in his *Jagir*. Having reached there he shut himself up in the fort.

This was shameful on his part—to leave his sister in the lurch. She was the person responsible for his rise in the Mughal Court. For a long time he had shared authority and power with her. It looks very strange that Asaf Khan thought of himself alone, and forgot the safety of his sister, the Empress and the first lady of the Mughal realm.

Khwaja Abul Hasan who seems to have been in a confused mental condition concealed himself for a while. But later he went over to Mahabat Khan swearing fidelity to him. He persuaded Iradat Khan and the historian Motamid Khan to follow his example. For a while they refused, but subsequently they also followed him.[17]

The Surrender of Noor Jahan. The cause of Noor Jahan was lost due to the treachery and cowardice of the nobility, especially Asaf Khan. She found further resistance impossible and surrendered to Mahabat Khan. She was allowed to join her dearly loved husband.

The Ascendancy of Mahabat Khan. The surrender of the Empress completed the ascendancy and supremacy of Mahabat Khan. He took charge of the government machinery and virtually became the controller of the destiny of the Mughal Empire. The hold of Noor Jahan over Jahangir was based on affection and devotion, while that of Mahabat Khan had no other foundation except force.

Mahabat Khan started confiscating the hidden wealth of his

17. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 266. Motamid Khan writes that the Khwaja :

"وآنگاه ایشان را و فقیر را همراه برده ملاقات داد"

Throughout the description of this rising he condemns Mahabat, even after joining him. This event he describes in an ambiguous way in the abov Persian quotation.

enemies, disclosed by Rai Govardhan. The Rai was once a favourite servant of Itimad-ud-Daula, and after his death became a steward to Noor Jahan. Now he was the principal lieutenant of Mahabat Khan.

Mahabat Khan got executed in his presence Abdus Samad, the daughter's son of Shaikh Chand, the astrologer. His only fault was strong association and deep intimation with Asaf Khan.

Expedition against Asaf Khan. Mahabat Khan had become the controller of the destinies of the Mughal Empire. All the nobles had acknowledged his self-acquired position. But his main opponent, Asaf Khan, was still out of his clutches, in the fort of Attock. Mahabat Khan[18] sent a body of Rajputs and Ahadis under his son, Bihroz. After a brief siege he found no other alternative but to surrender. He took an oath to uphold and support Mahabat Khan when, contrary to his expectations, he was promised security of life. In Mughal India the Attock fort was considered to be impregnable. It was constructed by Akbar on the left back of the Indus at a strategical point to serve as a military base against any invasion and incursion from the northwest.

The fact that Asaf Khan could not hold himself for a longer time in this fort betrays his efficiency as a military commander.

March to Kabul Resumed. After making necessary administrative arrangements, Mahabat Khan decided that the Imperial journey to Kabul be resumed. The Imperial cavalcade including the Emperor, Empress, other members of the royal household, the nobility and soldiers proceeded under the control of Mahabat Khan.

On reaching Attock Mahabat Khan brought Asaf Khan and his son Abu Talib out of the fort, with the formal permission of the Emperor, and placed them under the charge of his own men. The amnesty granted to Asaf Khan was no doubt kept but many of his associates were atrociously executed. Abdul Khaliq, the nephew of Khwaja Shams-ud-Din, Muhammad Khwaji, Muhammad Taqi and the aged Mulla Muhammad Thattvi may be mentioned in this connection. The most atrocious case was that of the Mulla. This pious aged man was the preceptor of Asaf Khan. This charge was quite enough against him. Motamid

18. ***Iqbal Nama***, pp 266-7 (Elliot and Dawson, Vol. VI, p. 428); ***Maathir-ul-Umara*** Vol. I ; Gladwin p. 83. For Rai Govardhan's life, see ***Maathir***, Vol. I.

Khan describes his execution with pathetic and heart-rending details. The chains were not securely tied to his feet. By a small movement they slipped off his feet, and he was accused of using magic. The Mulla was a Hafiz of the Quran. He used always to mutter the holy verses; for this he was accused of invoking divine curses on Mahabat Khan and was executed. After perpetrating such ghastly deeds at Attock, Mahabat Khan asked the Imperial cortege to resume its march. They halted at Jalalabad for some time. A deputation of the Kafir tribe of the Hindukush mountains waited upon the Emperor.

Entry into Kabul. On Sunday, 21 Shaban 1035 (8 May 1626) the entourage reached Kabul. The Emperor seated on an elephant entered the city scattering gold and silver pieces in his usual fashion. He stayed at the famous Shahr Ara garden. He paid a visit to the graves of his elders, *viz.* Emperor Babar, Mirza Hindal and Mirza Hakim.

Activities at Kabul. Apparently, the authority of Mahabat Khan was well established. The Emperor also appeared to have reconciled himself to the situation. Noor Jahan and Asaf Khan were powerless. There was no organised party to stand against Mahabat Khan. The nobles who were jealous of Noor Jahan in their heart of hearts must have appreciated this change. The Hindu nobility, it is possible, might have felt some satisfaction at the influence exercised by the Rajput soldiers of Mahabat Khan. The general public, especially the ruralites, must have been quite ignorant of the real nature of the revolution, as the means of spreading the news were very crude. This factor always leads to concocted rumours.

Among the Royal mandates issued at the instance of Mahabat Khan from Kabul were the following:

1. The Khan-i-Khanan, one of Mahabat Khan's bitterest opponents, was arrested while he was on his way to his *jagir* in Qanauj.

2. Muzaffar Khan, the subahdar of Agra, was ordered to keep a strong watch on Dara and Aurangzeb, who were at that time on their way to the Imperial Court as hostages for the good conduct of their father (Shah Jahan).

3. Sadiq Khan, a partisan of Mahabat Khan, was appointed Governor of the Lahore province.

Shah Jahan, of course, could think of staging a rebellion at that juncture, but he was too weak to materialise it. The brave patriot Malik Ambar had died in May 1626 at an advanced age of eighty. The struggle to save the Deccan from the Mughals, therefore, had died out for the time being. The situation on the North-western Frontier was also well in hand. Thus we find that the position of Mahabat Khan was very secure.

Mahabat Khan could not remain in power for a very long time. Sooner or later the nobles were sure to become jealous of his unprecedented position. The intelligent brain of Noor Jahan was sure to meditate on this problem. She must devise some way of her husband's emancipation and her restoration to power.The influence and the occasional misbehaviour of the brute and illiterate Rajput soldiers gave a cause of complaint and objection not only to the nobility but also to the rank and file.

It was due to this reason that the Rajputs and the Ahadis soon came to conceive bitter hostility towards each other. The Rajputs were accused of perpetrating tyranny over the people of Kabul. This was bound to rouse a deep resentment among the people; a sort of hatred developed between the Rajput soldiers of Mahabat Khan and the Muslim soldiers who accompanied the Royal cavalcade. Such charges were of general nature and are to be accepted very cautiously. But it is certain that the individual Rajputs must have shown improper conduct tow.rds the weak and the poor, under the intoxicating influence of powér and authority.

Clash between the Rajputs and the Ahadis. One day some Rajputs, in violation of the rules, sent their horses to graze in a Royal hunting ground near Kabul.[19] The Ahadis on guard took them to task, with the result that there was an exchange of hot words soon followed by a scuffle. An Ahadi lost his life. His associates lodged a report. They were told by Mahabat Khan that if they could point out the particular murderer he would hold an inquiry and impart justice. The Ahadis returned dissatisfied with the reply. They regarded it a mere attempt at evasion. After mutual consultation they decided to wreak vengeance on the Rajputs. Next day the whole body of Ahadis attacked a large body of the Rajputs. They killed between eight and

19. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 270. The hunting ground was at Yarat Chalak near Kabul.

nine hundred Rajputs. The dead included some of the fast friends and strongest supporters of Mahabat Khan. A general rising also broke out in the province which resulted in the murder of many more Rajputs.

When the news of this rising was broken to Mahabat Khan, he did not dare to go to the scene of the ghastly happenings. Habash Khan, Jamal Khan, Muhammad Khawas and Khan Rathor were appointed to suppress this rising. They succeeded in curbing the culprits and restoring order.

Badiuz-Zaman and Khwaja Qa sim, the son-in-law and the brother of Khwaja Abul Hasan, respectively, were charged with having fomented the trouble as the ring leaders of the rioters. They were summoned to Mahabat Kha'n presence and he personally cross-examined them. Their explanations were not accepted. They were sentenced to imprisonment, and their property was confiscated. This was how peace was restored. The army of Mahabat Khan had, however, suffered a great loss. He became unpopular among the people of Kabul and the Muslim soldiers.

If we critically examine the sad affair, we find that it started from a very minor incident. The Rajputs of Mahabat Khan had become arrogant, and this made the Muslim soldiers jealous of them. Had Mahabat Khan tried to please and pacify the Ahadis by immediately holding an inquiry, it might have nipped the evil in the bud. The evasive and arrogant attitude of Mahabat Khan provided a pretext for mischief-mongers to foment trouble. The subsequent inquiry and the punishment of the ring leaders of the anti-Rajput riots, no doubt, eased the situation for the time being, but the net result was the unpopularity and weakness of Mahabat Khan and his associates.

Noor Jahan Plans to Regain Power. This course of events was in favour of Noor Jahan. Her aim was to lull the suspicion of Mahabat Khan and to throw him out of power by winning the nobles to her side. So far as the winning over of the nobility was concerned, it was to be executed by the Empress herself. Mahabat Khan could be dislodged only by the Emperor acting under her advice.

Mahabat Khan Duped through the Emperor. As tutored by the Empress, the Emperor impressed upon Mahabat Khan that he was quite satisfied and pleased with the new situation. He told him that he had been helpless in the hands of Asaf Khan and Noor

Jahan. Otherwise he was always anxious to avail himself of his advice. He participated in all his pastimes, enjoyments and pursuits. He went regularly for hunting, although all the time guarded by Rajputs. A *Qamargha*[20] was also arranged, in which both the Emperor and the Empress participated.

In taking Mahabat Khan in his confidence the Emperor carried his duplicity so far as to warn Mahabat Khan plainly to be careful of his life as Noor Jahan and Asaf Khan had designs against him.

This kind of behaviour on the part of the Emperor deceived Mahabat Khan despite his caution and cleverness. He decreased the number of his own Rajput bodyguards. The strength of the guards placed round the Emperor was also reduced.[21]

Noor Jahan's Bid to Win Over Nobility. Meanwhile Noor Jahan did not sit idle. She used her splendid intellect and intriguing power to excite the nobility. The unwilling and weak-minded nobles were cajoled. She encouraged the wavering and bribed the greedy. The support of the common people was also enlisted and a great conspiracy was organised.

Departure from Kabul. The Imperial cortege left Kabul after a stay of several weeks. On the way Jahangir continued acting tactfully, so that every doubt might be removed from the mind of Mahabat Khan. On the other hand, Noor Jahan doubled her efforts. The number of her supporters increased daily, so much so that she succeeded in posting her own men near the Royal escort. Her confidant eunuch Hushiyar Khan secretly recruited about two thousand men at Lahore, and made his way to Kabul.

The Turning of the Tables. When the Imperial caravan was at a day's march from Rohtas, Noor Jahan got the opportunity of putting her plot into practice. Suddenly the Emperor decided to hold a review of the cavalary. All the soldiers, old as well as new, were ordered to arrange themselves in twos from the Imperial camp as far as they would extend, leaving a path in between the two rows.

20. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 272. قمرغه is a hunt arranged at a large scale in which a large number of servants collect a huge quantity of wild animals with the help of a big net called تور . These animals are hunted first by the Emperor and then by others with his permission. So قمر غه may be defined as Community Hunt.

21. Ibid., pp. 274-5.

Buland Khan, one of the Imperial attendants, was ordered to go to Mahabat Khan to tell him that the Emperor was arranging a review of the Begum's troops that day. It would be better for him to postpone his usual parade and salute, lest words should pass between the two parties resulting in strife. After Buland Khan, Khwaja Abul Hasan was sent to enforce his wish more strongly. He was to urge Mahabat Khan to proceed a stage ahead of them. Motamid Khan describes that the Khwaja prevailed[22] upon him by cogent reasons to act upon these suggestionns. Our eye-witness, the contemporary chronicler Motamid Khan, does not give the details of the talk of Buland Khan and Khwaja Abul Hasan with Mahabat Khan.

It is certain that Mahabat Khan felt the ground crumbling beneath his feet. The message delivered to him by the Khwaja, whose two near relatives he had recently insulted at Kabul, could clearly indicate to a man of Mahabat Khan's calibre that Noor Jahan had distinctly got the better of him. He realised that he had become too weak to control the march of events. Practically his period of domination was over.

Mahabat Khan professed to obey the Imperial orders to march a stage ahead of the Imperial cavalcade. In practice he marched so rapidly that the Imperial army which followed close after him could not overtake him. A step taken up by Mahabat Khan even at this stage of mental disturbance deserves all praise for his diplomatic sense. He took along with him Asaf Khan, his son Abu Talib, Tahmurath (Shaista Khan) and Hoshang (sons of Daniyal) and Lashkari (son of Mukhlas Khan) to serve as hostages for his future safety.

The Emperor stayed at Rohtas and held a Darbar. The most important problem was obviously the reduction of Mahabat Khan and the release of the prominent persons still with him. Noor Jahan at last decided to send through Afzal Khan an Imperial order to Mahabat Khan. He was commanded to release at once[23] Asaf Khan, Abu Talib, Tahmurath, Hoshang and Lashkari.

22. Ibid., p. 276

23. As usual in those days gossips and fantastic stories got circulated among people. Peter Mundy, a contemporary European traveller, has based his account of the event on such gossips. For example, he says that Mahabat Khan had Asaf Khan beaten with shoes and kept him in irons (Vol. II, p. 204). Obviously it is wrong.

Mahabat Khan was to go to Thattah to check Shah Jahan, who had gone to Sind from the Deccan to try his luck after having heard about the events at the Court. Mahabat Khan was warned that in the case of delay in sending Asaf Khan to the Court an army would be sent against him.

Release of Asaf Khan and Others. Mahabat Khan at once released the sons of Daniyal. He planned to keep Asaf Khan and his son till he was reasonably safe. In reply he wrote that he was suspicious of the intentions of the Empress. If he released Asaf Khan, he feared pursuit by an army. He promised to set him at liberty after having passed Lahore.

In response to this reply the Begum sent Afzal Khan with the demand of the prompt release of Asaf Khan. She threatened to press the matter to extremities. Upon this Mahabat Khan released[24] Asaf Khan after taking a promise of fidelity. But he still detained Abu Talib, releasing him only after he had marched a few stages towards Thatta.

Reorganisation of the State Machinery. The Imperial camp reached Lahore safely. The Empress was in complete ascendancy. The administrative machinery was reorganised at Lahore. Asaf Khan was appointed *vakil.* He also held the governorship of the Lahore province. Khwaja Abul Hasan was appointed Dewan, Mir Jumla Bakhshi and Afzal Khan got the office of Khan-i-Saman. Later on, Fidai Khan became Governor of Bengal.

All these nobles had rendered meritorious services to the cause of Noor Jahan. After her restoration to authority she was bound to honour and reward them. Noor Jahan's success in regaining her lost authority from the clutches of the soldier-diplomat Mahabat Khan was the master stroke of her policy. It shows that Noor Jahan could patiently and secretly work according to a well-executed plan and had the proper qualification to achieve her end and enjoy the fruit of her success.

24. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 275-6 (E. & D., Vol. VI, p. 430), Khwafi Khan, Vol. I, pp. 377-8; Gladwin, pp. 86-7.

CHAPTER 12

SHAH JAHAN AND MAHABAT KHAN

During the last two years of Jahangir's reign, Shah Jahan was under the shadow of the dark clouds of misfortune. The news of Mahabat Khan's coup was very encouraging for him. He left Ahmednagar on 27 Ramazan 1035 (7 June 1626). He marched through Nasik-Trimbak pass towards the north. He had only one thousand horsemen with him. Half of them had been provided by Raja Kishan Singh, and were under his command.

Shah Jahan hoped that he would succeed in enlisting the sympathies of some more Zamindars on the way. He declared that he was going to release his father from the control of Mahabat Khan, but there cannot be any doubt about the fact that he was trying to fish in troubled waters to his own advantage. He could join neither Noor Jahan nor Mahabat Khan. Everybody knew that both were his enemies at that time. He reached Ajmer without any increase in his force. Unfortumately, Raja Kishan Singh died there. It resulted in the immediate dispersal of his five hundred retainers. It made Shah Jahan very gloomy and sad. He, however, decided to go to Thatta with the remaining force. He marched through Nagor, on the borders of Jodhpur and Jaisilmere states. Unexpectedly, no one came to join him, although his mother belonged to Jodhpur and he seems to have expected some help from his maternal relatives.

Shah Jahan at Thatta. Shah Jahan found Thatta well fortified by a large force. Its governor was a devoted adherent of Noor Jahan. He did not listen to any promise or threat of the prince. Shah Jahan could neither storm the fort nor starve its garrison.

He thought of going to Persia, like his great-grandfather Humayun, to get help from his powerful friend Shah Abbas, with whom he had friendly correspondence. It appears that his plan was not liked by his followers. Perhaps they preferred heroic

death to exile. They made two suicidal attempts to take Thatta in flagrant violation of the orders of the prince.

Shah Jahan soon gave up his plan of proceeding to Persia. The course of future events justified his decision. The period of his misfortune was about to end, and within a year and a half, he was going to be proclaimed as the Emperor of India. These are some of the factors that made Shah Jahan give up going to Persia:

(1) His own followers were unwilling to take up the hazardous and long journey.

(2) The prince himself fell ill and was too weak to take up a long journey.

(3) He feared an attack by the Governor of Thatta during his march.

(4) He heard that Prince Pervez was hopelessly ill. Thus another rival, who was very strong at that moment, was on the verge of disappearance. It kindled a new hope in his mind.

Mahabat Khan's "reign of hundred days" had proved a nine day's wonder. The general was himself a fugitive, who might make an alliance with Shah Jahan against their common enemy, the Empress Noor Jahan.

The prince started[1] his journey to the Deccan through Gujrat and Berar. As he was extremely weak due to illness, he travelled in a *palki* (palanquin) instead of riding a horse.

Shah Jahan had reached Gujrat when he heard that after long illness Prince Pervez had at last died on 6 Safar 1036 (28 October 1626). He was in his thirty-eighth year. His body was carried to Agra and buried there in his garden. A tomb is pointed out as that of Pervez in Lahore also,[2] but this is not correct; he was, of certain, buried at Agra.

The death of Pervez at such a crucial moment gave birth to rumours[3] that Shah Jahan had a hand in it.

1. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 273-4, 279-82 (E. & D., Vol. VI, pp. 429, 431-3); Mohammad Hadi (E. & D. Vol. II, p. 97); Khwafi Khan, Vol. I, pp. 382-3; Gladwin, pp. 85, 88.

2. *Tahqiqat-i-Chisht*, pp. 558-9, Latif, *Lahore*, p. 160.

3. Tod (Vol. I, p 294, Vol. II, p. 33) regards Shah Jahan responsible for the death of Pervez; *English Factories in India 1624-29*, p. 152. Aurangzeb, in one of his letters to his captive father, Shah Jahan, condemns him for the murder of Khusrau and Pervez. See Sarkar, *Aurangzeb*, Vol. III, p. 155.

Pervez's death, no doubt, cleared the way of Shah Jahan, and on hearing the news, he must have heaved a sight of relief, but Shah Jahan's poisoning him is incredible. Pervez died after a long illness which was the result of his intemperate habits.

From Gujrat Shah Jahan reached Nasik Trimbak. He took up his residence at Khaibar (or Junair)[4] at a short distance from Nasik.

Mahabat Khan was expecting a convoy from Bengal bringing twenty-two lakhs of rupees for him. He hoped to raise a large army with that money to retrieve his fortunes. Unfortunately for him, the Imperial government got wind of it, and it was forcefully seized by its agents. Deprived of the money and pursued hotly by an army sent by Noor Jahan, Mahabat Khan took refuge in the deserts of Mewar.

He sent his trusted emissaries to Shah Jahan making an overture for complete reconciliation and alliance. He wrote to the prince that on receiving an assurance of complete pardon, he would enter into his service. Naturally, Shah Jahan was extremely happy on receiving the envoys. He sent him a letter, impressed with his own hand, not only pardoning him but enkindling many hopes for future glory. Soon after, Mahabat Khan joined Shah Jahan, at Khaibar (or Junair) with 2000 cavalry. Mahabat Khan presented to the prince a thousand mohurs, a diamoned worth Rs. 20,000 and other valuable things. The prince honoured him and awarded him an elephant, a horse, a sword and a dagger inlaid with precious stones.

The news of this alliance and friendship between these two geniuses shocked Noor Jahan. She appointed Khan Jahan Lodhi[5] Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial forces and ordered him to undertake a military campaign to suppress and crush the new allies

4. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 280-2.

5. Ibid., pp. 277-9 (E. & D., Vol. VI, pp. 431, 434,) Gladwin, pp. 89-90.

CHAPTER 13

NOOR JAHAN AND JAHANGIR'S OTHER WIVES

Noor Jahan fascinated the Emperor Jahangir immediately after her marriage in May 1611. She continued exerting her influence on the Emperor till his demise. This was despite the fact that Jahangir had, according to Xavier,[1] twenty lawful wives, besides a large number of concubines and female attendants.

Nothing is so interesting in Indian history as the evolution of the Mughal culture. The Turko-Iranian tradition brought by the Mughals from outside intermingled with the local Rajput traditions. Akbar started matrimonial alliances with the Rajputs. He and his son Jahangir, who was himself born of a Rajput mother, married Rajput ladies of renowned families.

In what follows a brief account of Jahangir's legal wives is given.

1. Raj Kumari Man Bai of Amber Entitled Shah Begum. Salim was hardly fifteen years old when he was betrothed to Man Bai, a daughter of his maternal uncle Raja Bhagwan Dass of Amber. The marriage at such an early age was a Hindu custom, but the marriage with the first cousin was the Muslim practice. Two crores of tankas were fixed as the "Sachiq" (ساچق). Akbar himself along with his nobles went to the Raja's house in the form of a marriage procession on 13 February 1585.[2] Both Muslim and Hindu ceremonies were observed. A very rich dowry was given by the Raja to his daughter. She won the affection of the prince by her charms, manners and intelligence. Her first child was a daughter, Sultan-un-Nisa. The second child Khusrau[3] was born on 6 August 1578 at Lahore. On his birth she got the title of

1. Maclagan, p. 75.

2. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama* (Beveridge); Vol. III, pp. 637-8; Badauni (Lowe), Vol. II, p. 352; Nizam's *Tabaqat* (E. & D.), Vol. V, p. 447.

3. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 19.

Shah Begum. She committed suicide in 1604 plunging Salim into deep grief.

2. *Jagat Gosain.* In 1585, Jagat Gosain, a daughter of Udai Singh, the "Mota Raja" or the "Fat Prince," was married[4] to Prince Salim amidst great festivities. Although it was also a political marriage, it was a very successful one. She was extremely beautiful, intelligent and brave—a typical specimen of Rujput race. She was the mother of Emperor Shah Jahan. Many anecdotes illustrating the wit and wisdom of Jagan Gosain and her superiority over Noor Jahan are reported. But the fact is that after the dawn of Noor Jahan in the Harem nobody could eclipse her. Khwafi Khan[5] gives this very interesting story about a lion hunt. Once Jahangir went ahunting accompanied by both Jagat Gosain and Noor Jahan. The huntsmen were trying to goad a lion within the range of the Imperial guns. Meanwhile the Emperor fell asleep. Both the ladies sat by his side along with two or three maid-servants. Suddenly a lion came in roaring. Noor Jahan was left perplexed and spell-bound. The Rani took the gun and fired. The bullet struck the lion's chest. It roared, took a high leap and fell dead on the ground. This roused the Emperor from sleep. Seeing the dead lion and the Rani with gun in her hand, he applauded her bravery; with terror-stricken Noor Jahan he was displeased. Khwafi Khan says that Ismat-un-Nisa, the mother of Noor Jahan, tried to pacify the Emperor by stressing that the use of arms is the function of men, who have to display their bravery in the battlefield. The delicate ladies are meant for coquetry and blandishment. This made Jahangir forget his displeasure.

Noor Jahan started learning the use of arms and was soon proficent in handling them. She, later on, joined the Emperor in tiger hunts and often killed them with her own hands.[6]

The chroniclers[7] praise the physical charms, subtlety of thought and spontaneity of response of the Rani. She could wield arms and ride on horseback like experts. Unfortunately, she had to face Noor Jahan in the Harem. No doubt, her son Shah Jahan

4. Ibid , Gladwin, p. iii.
5. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. I, pp. 289-90.
6. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 348, 375 ; Vol. II, p. 105
7. *Mukhadarat-i-Taimuria*, Vol. II, pp. 11, 12.

in the long run thwarted the designs of Noor Jahan, but Jagat Gosain could not overshadow her. Some anecdotes are preserved which depict her verbal contests with Noor Jahan. Some of them are reproduced here. They show that she could use her tongue against her rival as dexterously as she could wield sword.

(1) Once in the royal compay Noor Jahan happened to be in white dress while Jodh Bai was wearing coloured clothes. Addressing the Emperor, Noor Jahan said ironically, "Your Majesty, this rustic woman always selects gaudy colours. I have never seen her in a dress of sober colours." Jagat Gosain spontaneously retorted, "A widow may select white clothes but a *'So agan'* (married woman) must have coloured clothes." Noor Jahan was silenced. It may be pointed out here that the Hindu society did not appreciate the remarriage of widows.

(2) Once Noor Jahan told Jahangir, just out of flattery, that sweet smell emitted out of his mouth. The Emperor was pleased, and he talked of it to Jagat Gosain. She at once replied, "Your Majesty, the woman who has smelt the mouth of only one man in life cannot appreciate it. It can only be differentiated from bad odour by a woman who has seen more than one man. So Noor Jahan can only judge it."

I feel that these two tales out of a large number will suffice to illustrate the wit and humour of Jagat Gosain, the mother of Shah Jahan.

Jagat Gosain died on Friday, 30 November 1619, at Agra.[8] She was buried in Bagh Dahra according to her own will. A fine structure was set up on her grave. Its ruins can still be seen in the suburbs of Agra.[9]

After her death it was decided to address her as "Bilqis Makani"[10] in State papers.

3. Sahib-i-Jamal. Sahib-i-Jamal[11] was a daughter of Khwaja Hasan, cousin of Zain Khan Koka, who was the son of Pichah Jan Angah, one of the nurses of Akbar. Her marriage was solemnised in 1586. She was extremely beautiful and was dearly loved by the prince. Pervez was born to her at Kabul in November 1589. Her

8. *Tuzk* (R. and B), Vol. II, p. 84.
9. Latifs, *Agra*, pp. 192-3,
10. Kamboh, Vol. I, pp. 97, 98.
11. *Tuzk* (R. and B.), Vol. I, pp. 18, 19 (see also footnote 1); Beale p. 345.

magnificent tomb[12] is in Lahore and is at present used to house the Government Record Office. It is wrongly attributed by the common mind to Anarkali, who is a legendary figure and whose romance with Prince Salim is the subject of many dramas and novels.[13]

4. *Malika-i-Jahan.* Malika-i-Jahan (queen of the world) was a daughter of Raja Kalyan of Jaisalmere. Her Rajput name is not known.

5. *Nur-un-Nisa Begum,* sister of Muzaffar Husain.

6. *Saliha Bano,* daughter of Qasim Khan.

7. *Karamsi,* daughter of Raja Keshudas Rathor.

8. *The daughter of Ali Rai.* ruler of little Tibet.

9. *The daughter of Mubarak Chak of Kashmir.*

10. *The daughter of Husain Chak of Kashmir.*

11. *The daughter of the King of Khandesh.*

12. *The daughter of Khwja-i-Jahan of Kabul.*

13. *The grand-daughter of Khizar Khan*[14] *Hazara.*

14. *The daughter of Rai Singh of Bikaner,*[15] married on 28 June 1586.

15. *The daughter of Said Khan Ghakkar.*[16]

16. *She daughter*[17] *of Jagat Singh* and grand-daughter of Raja Mann Singh. The ceremony was performed at the house of Jahangir's mother, Maryam Zamani.

17. *The daughter*[18] *of Raja Ram Chandra Bundela* whose name is also not known. She was married in 1609 at the request of her father, who had recently accepted the overlordship of the Mughals after a revolt.

12. Baqir, *Lahore,* pp. 412-6. See also an article on "Anarkali" by Maulana Ilm ud-Din Salik in Annual Number of *Nairang-i-Khyal* (an Urdu magazine of Lahore).

13. For example, see *Anarkali* (Urdu) a novel by Muhammad Din Fauq (Lahore, 1929). The best and the most popular Urdu drama celebrating the "Anarkali" legend is *Anarkali* by Imtiaz Ali Taj. See an article "The Story of Anarkali" in English by C. Grey in *Journal of the Panjab University Historical Society,* April 1934.

14. For Jahangir's marriages with the wives from No. 4 to 13, see *Tuzk* (R. & B.), pp. 1, 18, 19, 326; *Akbar Nama* (Text.), Vol., III, p. 388; Gladwin, p. 111.

15. Abul Fazl, (*Akbar Nama* Text), p. 496; Lowe, *Badauni,* Vol. II, p. 361.

16. Lowe, *Badauni,* p. 368.

17. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, pp. 144-5.

18. Ibid; p. 160.

18. *Noor Jahan Begum.* Mehr-un-Nisa, the daughter of Mirza Ghiath, an Iranian by birth, dominated the Harem and the person of her husband so much that she alone is remembered by the popular mind as having been the Empress of Emperor Jahangir.

Out of the eighteen wives, whose account is preserved in history, seven were Hindu and eleven Muslim. It shows that the Harem was cosmopolitan in composition. Most of these marriages were political in nature. As it is apparent, matrimonial alliances were made with Rajputs to strengthen the ties of friendship. The marriages with the Chak princesses, who belonged to the ex-ruling family of Kashmir, and the princess from little Tibet were all political marriages. Such marriages were intended either to honour the family of the lady, or to secure their co-operation and friendship.

In connection with political marriages, the marriage of Ram Chandra Bundela's daughter with Jahangir is a very significant example. This Raja had rebelled. After submission, he himself requested the Emperor to marry his daughter. The psychology of the man seems to be to have relation with the Emperor, and be equal in status to other Rajas having matrimonial alliances with the Emperor. Secondly, he wanted to be secure against the intrigues of his rivals in the court.

It is a pity that the talented and charming young girls of princely families were played as pawns on the chessboard of politics. Possibly the Emperor could not attend to them regularly. They lived in palaces a rich life, splendidly isolated from the general public. Only those wives of an Emperor came into prominence who were either the mothers of promising sons or had extraordinary physical charms and qualities of head and heart. In the case of Jahangir, Shah Begum, the mother of Khusrau, and Sahib-i-Jamal, the mother of Parvez, died before his accession. The prince like any other human being felt these losses very much.

Out of other wives we read of Jagat Gosain a great deal. She also died in the lifetime of the Emperor.

Hawkins[20] writes in 1611 that the number of Jahangir's wives was 300. Out of them only four were the chief queens. Terry[21] writes in 1618-9 that the Emperor's women numbered a thousand. It is evident that these travellers count the concubines, the attend-

20. *The Hawkin's Voyages*, p. 421.
21. *Voyage to East India*, pp. 405-6.

ants and the slavegirls also. Moreover, they wrote whatever they heard in the bazars, markets, inns and the gatherings of common soldiers. So they based their statements mainly on what they heard from the scandal-mongering and gossip-minded Indian masses.

Jahangir got two sons,[22] Shahriyar and Jahandar, from two concubines, whose names are not preserved in history. Jahandar died young and Shahriyar became a well-known figure in history as it has been discussed in many other chapters.

In March 1611 Jahangir saw the widow of Sher Afgan for the first time on the eve of Jashn-i-Nawroz. After having been enamourned by her personality he married her. This lady, who was given the title of Noor Jahan by her admirer, dominated him for about sixteen years. The history of the Mughal India from 1611 to 1627 reveals that Noor Jahan was the only woman who could appeal the Emperor. All the Hindu and Muslim princesses, who were no doubt talented and beautiful women, had been thrown to the background.

It is really the great achievement of Noor Jahan to dominate to such an extent an experienced and educated artist, the Mughal sovereign, who had seen so many ladies of high rank and birth. It means that this august daughter of Iran possessed extraordinary qualities and her toweriug personality was head and shoulder above other wives of the Emperor.

22. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 20.

Chapter 14

THE NUMISMATICS OF NOOR JAHAN

The sovereignty under the Muslim rulers was expressed by the coinage and the Khutbah (the use of the name of the sovereign in the mosque-sermons before the Friday and after the Eid prayers). The titles of the ruler, the name of the mint and the year of minting were impressed upon the coins. So the coins of the ancient and medieval kings are a very important source of their history.

Under Akbar the coins were made very artistically. The Persian Nasta'liq (نستعلیق) script was adopted for minting the legends. The decorative adaptability of this script, combined with artistic designing, gave attractive look to the Mughal coins.

The coins of the great Mughals from Akbar to Shah Jahan abound in types, varieties and sizes. The coins which Jahangir issued from the Imperial mint at Agra in 1610 and 1611 are particularly fair and fine. They may be compared in artistic merit and refinement of execution with the best coins of other countries. The Mughal coins were struck in gold, silver and copper. The mints were scattered throughout the Empire from Kabul to Burhanpur.

It was a convention in India that the coins issued by the predecessors of a king were not withdrawn by him. Under Jahangir the copper coins issued by Sher Shah and Akbar were in circulation in large numbers. So his copper money is very rare. Under Jahangir, minting attained a very high level of excellence. He generally struck gold and silver coins. The coins minted at a particular mint had its distinct verses.[1]

Jahangir got minted gold coins of a very high value. "Noor

1. For example, the coins minted at the Lahore mint had this verse:

بدهر باد روان تا فلک بود در دور
بنام شاه جهانگیر سکهٔ لاهور

Afshan" and "Khair Qabul" (نور افشان=light-scattering; خیر قبول= may this be accepted!) may be mentioned in this connection. Another very striking example of Jahangir's coins is his zodiacal mohars and rupees.

The months in which they were struck were represented by their zodiac sign.

The importance which Emperor Jahangir gave to Noor Jahan is unprecedented in the Mughal history. She shared sovereignty with her august husband. Every honour was showered on her. Jahangir, however, did not give her a rank in the Mansabdari system. Certainly she did not need it. As the co-sovereign of Mughal India, or as the real force behind the State authority, ranks were bestowed upon many nobles at her whim and desire. Out of the emblems of sovereignty only the Khutbah was not recited in her name. Perhaps it was due to the fact that the Khutbah was under the control of the Ulema. They were strong enough to refuse the inclusion of the name of the Shi'ah Emperss in the Khutbah, if they had been asked to do so. The prudent Emperor, or rather the Empress, did not deem it proper to intrude into the domain of the Ulema.

Coins were issued in the name of Noor Jahan and the Farmans were also adorned with her name. Their opening words used to be حکم علیہ عالیہ مہد علیا نور جہان بادشاہ بیگم. But all Farmans and all the coins issued after her ascendancy did not bear her name. The coins issued in the Queen's name contain the following verse :[2]

بحکم شاہ جہانگیر یافت صد زیور

بنام نور جہان بادشاہ بیگم زر

["By the order of the King Jahangir, the gold got a hundred ostentations added to it, by getting impressed on it the name of Noor Jahan, the Queen."]

The gold and silver coins bearing this legend were minted at different places. They also include zodiac coins. Her coins are to be found in the museums of the East and the West. They are also available in many private collections.[3]

2. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 56-7.
3. For the coins of Jahangir and Noor Jahan see:
(1) Whitehead's *Catalogue of Coins in Lahore Museum*, Vol. II, pp. xx to xxv.
(2) W. Marsden, *The Oriental Coins*, pp. 466-70.
(3) Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of British Museum Coins*, Introduction, p. lxxxvii, No. 23-305.
(4) Syed M.D. Rafi, *Gunj-i-Shaigan* (Urdu), Part I, pp. 90 to 100 ; Part II, pp. 132-7, 181 ; Syed Shamsullah Qadri, *Naqud-ul-Islamia* (Urdu), pp. 19 to 26.

Chapter 15

NOOR JAHAN'S INTEREST IN FINE ARTS

The Mughals have left a very rich tradition in the domain of Fine Arts. From Babur to the last of their rulers they were all interested in its various branches. They were not only conquerors, administrators and just rulers, but they were also patrons of arts and letters also. They had inherited rich traditions of taste in Fine Arts from their Central Asian Timurid ancestors.

Jahangir may aptly be described as the Prince of Artists. His interest mainly centred round painting and gardening. Yet his reign is marked for the construction of some very superb specimens of architecture.

The union of Noor Jahan and Jahangir also proved a blessing in disguise for the development of Fine Arts. She had cultivated a very delicate and refined taste. She possessed a very deep understanding of art. Under her patronage the Mughal art received a great impetus and a new lustre was added to the artistic activities of the august reign of her consort. As it is apparent from the discussions in other chapters, Noor Jahan was an astute diplomat and a shrewd administrator who could solve very easily the intricate problems of the State. This chapter will reveal the delicate aspects of her personality and her contribution to Fine Arts. Let us examine her interest in different branches of Fine Arts, separately.

Architecture. The Mughal architecture forms a golden chapter of the history of human attainments. By the time Noor Jahan came into prominence the Mughal architecture had already attained a considerably high level of evolution. It appears that the talents of Noor Jahan actively worked in the planning and execution of all the Royal buildings constructed between 1611 and 1627. Besides the Royal edifices she got constructed a few bulidings after her own name, possibly out of her own private purse. The construction of a mosque by her in Kashmir has already been discussed in the chapter on Kashmir. Two of the very famous structures raised by her are discussed below.

(1) *Noor Jahan Serai.*[1] In Mughal India a network of roads interlinked important centres. On these roads serais were constructed at convenient distances for the use of the travellers. Noor Jahan populated a town called Noor Mahal on the highway in Jullundar Doab. She got constructed a very spacious serai there. It is a superb piece of architecture. Its main gate (the western one) is richly decorated with multicoloured panels of lime-mosaic. The importance of this serai can be guaged from the fact that "Serai Noor Mahal" in local idiom means some spacious and important edifice.

The Empress held the title Noor Mahal between 1611 and 1616. The town was founded during this period. The construction of the serai also started at that time as it is called "Serai Noor Mahal," and not "Serai Noor Jahan." But the construction of the serai and the adjoining garden had been completed in 1620,[2] when Jahangir visited it.

The site was anciently occupied by a town called Kot Ghalur. It "appears to have fallen into considerable disrepair," and "was rebuilt under the auspices of the Emperor Jahangir," from whose consort, the present name of the town (i.e. Noor Mahal) was derived. In the Sikh and British periods the serai was used for official purposes. The same is the case even now. The police station, rest house, post office, and a high school are housed within its premises.

The two visits of the Imperial cavalcade to this place are mentioned. On 1 January 1621,[3] the Emperor reached Noor Serai. The Empress arranged a great feast in honour of the Emperor. She presented befor the Emperor a large varity of rarities and delicacies In order to please the Queen, the Emperor accepted some gifts out of them. The Emperor stayed there for two days and made certain decisions. Then the camp moved towards Sirhind.

Then[4] again next year the Emperor passed that way and stayed there. Jahangir calls it Noor Serai.

(2) *Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah.* Among the relics of Mughal India, Itimad-ud-Daulah's tomb at Agra stands as the superb

1. Percy Brown *Indian Architecture* (*Islamic Period*), p. 108; Cunningham, *Archaeological Jullundur District Gazetteer*, pp. 72-3; *Reports*, Vol. XIV, p. 62; *The Imperial Gazetteer* Vol. XIX, pp. 231-2.
2. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 192.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 220.

specimen of Mughal architecture. Itimad-ud-Daulah, the father of Noor Jahan, died in January 1622. He was buried at Agra in his own garden across the Jumna. Noor Jahan naturally felt aggrieved at the death of her father, who died when she was at the zenith of her glory. A legend tells us that Noor Jahan proposed to erect a tomb of pure silver on the grave of her beloved father. But she was advised by experts to use marble instead because of its durability. The building, which is neither massive nor very big, was completed in six years at an enormous cost. It is situated on the left bank of the Jumna in a garden surrounded by a wall. In the centre, on a raised platform, stands the tomb. It is a square building measuring 69 feet on each side. At each angle there is an octagonal tower. These four towers are rather squat in proportion. The tomb is made of white marble. The inner as well as the outer surface of the building is decorated with very fine specimens of multicoloured pietra-dura work. The whole structure looks very charming and exquisitely attractive. But Fergusson says,[5] "Had it, indeed, been built in red sand-stone, or even with an inlay of white marble like that of Humayun, it would not have attracted much attention. Its real merit consists in being wholly in white marble and being covered throughout with a mosaic in pietra dura." It is certainly a splendid specimen of the type of ornamentation in India. The fine tracery of the pierced marble slabs of its windows, which resemble those of Salim Chishti's tomb at Fatehpur Sikri, the beauty of its white marble walls and the rich colour of its decorations make up so beautiful a whole that it can be compared only to the works of Shah Jahan. Under Shah Jahan, no doubt, some better specimens of this art were constructed, but its importance lies in its being the pioneer work.

Marshal[6] pays tribute to this edifice in these words : "There is no other building like it in the entire range of Mughal architecture, the delicacy of treatment and the chaste quality of its decoration places it in a class by itself. . . the Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah expresses. . . the high aesthetic ideals that prevailed among the Moghals at that time."

When we see this tomb we feel that it has been executed not by

5. Fergusson, Vol. II, pp. 306-7.

6. Marshal's Chapter on "Architecture" in *Cambridge History*, Vol. IV, pp. 552-3.

masons but by jewellers. It served as a model of decorative art for Shah Jahan who profusely employed pietra-dura work in the embellishment of his structures. Percy Brown[7] regards it the connecting link between the style of Akbar and that of Shah Jahan. Apart from marking the stage of transition this elegant structure stands in a class by itself. "It illustrates a fresh interpretation of the building art, an expression of the style in its most delicate and refined aspect." In its surroundings of green gardens, fountains, pathways and flowerbeds, it reposes like a gem within a casket.[8]

Noor Jahan was the maker of her own tomb which has been discussed in a separate chapter. She is also credited to have constructed Jahangir's masoleum.[9] But it is wrong.

Gardening. The sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan has all along been famous for the abundance and variety of fiowers, fruit and foliage, which occupied a very important place in the social and religious life of the Indian people. The flowers have always been used on festive occasions, to adorn the newly-married couples and to cover the bier of the dead—special sanctity is attached to certain flowers such as Tulsi by the Hindus. The Muslims shower flowers on the graves of the saints. Amir Khusrau and Malik Muhammad Jaisi have given detailed descriptions of the flora of India.

Babur felt disgusted at the sight of the Indian gardens and other aspects of Indian culture. He himself managed to snatch some time out of his military campaigns and turned his attention to the laying out of the gardens. They were after the style of the Central Asian gardens and were profusely covered with foliage and greenery. There were canals of running water with rows of fountains playing in them. The avenues of cypress trees imparted to them a sublime tinge of sobriety. In the midst of the gardens there were summer houses and waterfalls. In the hot climate of India such gardens provided a cool and refreshing refuge. Besides Indian flowers the Central Asian and Iranian flowers and fruits were introduced by the Mughals in their Indian gardens.

7. *Indian Architecture* (*Islamic Period*), pp. 108-9.

8. Besides Fergusson, Percy Brown and Marshal, see Murray's *Hand Book*, pp. 294-5, Latif's *Agra*, pp. 182-4.

9. Percy Brown, p. 108, Fergusson, p. 304, ascribe the construction to Noor Jahan. It was constructed as the State building at the instance of Shah Jahan. Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 11, says that Shah Jahan got it constructed at a cost of Rs. 10 lakhs and it took ten years to complete it.

Babur's example was followed by his descendants, especially by Jahangir, his great grandson. Jahangir loved nature and was fond of gardening. Wherever Jahangir sojourned for some time a garden would spring up. It was a very happy coincidence that Empress Noor Jahan also possessed a similar zeal for gardening. All the gardens laid by Jahangir after 1611 were planned jointly by the Imperial couple. The gardens of the Empress in Kashmir have been discussed in a separate chapter.

Lahore was a favourite city of the Empress, where she appears to have laid many gardens. In 1607 Jahangir went to Jahangirpur, his hunting-place, where he constructed a minaret on the grave of his pet antelope, Mansaroj. On 7 Zil-Haj 1015 (26 March 1607) he left the Lahore fort[10] and took up his quarters in Bagh-i-Dil-Amiz on the other bank of the river Ravi. He stayed there for four days. He bestowed honours and awards on many of the royal servants there. It is obvious that he celebrated Id-ul-Azha (the festival of sacrifice), which fell on 29 March, in this garden.

While coming to Lahore[11] from the North the Emperor visited this garden on Monday, 12 Sha'ban 1016 (23 November 1607) and met his mother, who was staying there.

It is obvious that the garden existed before the marriage of Noor Jahan with Jahangir and her rise to power. Naturally it was built neither *by* her nor *for* her. The assertion of Dr. M. Baqir,[12] therefore, "that the garden was originally built by Jahangir's celebrated queen, Noor Jahan" is wrong.

Noor Jahan, after her ascendancy, must have got access to this garden. In the Mughal city of Lahore, there were a large number of gardens on both the sides of the river Ravi. A close study of contemporary sources reveals the names of many such gardens.

Noor Jahan appears to have founded Bagh-i-Dilkusha (besides many more) on the right bank of the river Ravi, close to Bagh-i-Dil-Amiz. It was in Bagh-i-Dilkusha that Jahangir[13] was buried. Aurangzeb's historian, Munshi Muhammad Kazim,[14] while describ-

10. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 90.
11. Ibid., p. 131.
12. Baqir, *Lahore*, p. 375.
13. در آن طرف آب لاهور در باغی که نور جهان بیگم اساس نهاده
بود بخاک سپردند.

Iqbal Nama, p. 294; Latif's *Lahore*, p. 106.
14. *Alamgir Nama*, pp. 840-1.

ing the visit of the Emperor to his grandfather, Jahangir's tomb in October 1663, gives the name of the garden as Dilkusha.

Even the eunuchs of the Empress, Hoshiar Khan[15] and Jawahir Khan, had developed a taste for gardening under her influence and had laid out their personal gardens at Lahore.

In Kabul province, midway between Jalalabad and Kabul, there is a very charming Mughal garden at Nimla. It is marked for its beautiful cypress trees which are said to have been planted by Jahangir and Noor Jahan.[16]

Among the gardens of Noor Jahan at Agra, the Noor Afshan Garden[17] seems to have been exquisitely fine. The sixteenth year of Jahangir's accession began on 10 March 1621. The Royal camp at that time was at Agra. The Emperor along with ladies of the Imperial Harem rowed to this garden on Wednesday, 12 March 1621. It shows that the garden was situated on the left bank of the river Jumna at a little distance from the fort. The Imperial party spent the night in the garden. On Thursday, the Empress organised a grand feast and presented offerings. The Emperor selected jewels and jewelled ornaments worth Rs. 100,000. Only a few[18] weeks earlier, while coming from Delhi to Agra by boat, the Emperor stayed in this garden for three days.

One can easily imagine the grandeur and glory of the garden that became the centre of Imperial festivities.

By the end of the year 1620,[19] we read of a party, held in Noor Manzil Garden at Agra. Prince Shahriyar was given a present of Rs. 100,000.

The tradition of laying well-planned gardens after Central Asian style started by Babur reached the zenith of its glory and perfection under Shah Jahan. Noor Jahan's period of ascendancy is a very important link in the chain of the evolution of Mughal culture.

15. Prince Dara Shikoh, son of Shah Jahan, compiled a biography entitled *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, of the saint Mian Mir, who died and was buried at Lahore in 1635. In this book he mentions those gardens, tombs and other important places which were the resorts of the saints. Therein he mentions the gardens of Hoshiar Khan and Jawahir Khan. See Urdu translation of the book.

16 *Beyond the Khyber Pass*, p. 119-20.

17. *Tuzk* (R & B.), Vol. II, pp. 199-200.

18. Ibid., p. 197. (Here in a footnote the translator of the *Tuzk*, Alexander Rogers, attributes this garden to Babur. Only two pages later in the text the Emperor remarks that it belonged to Noor Jahan.)

19. Ibid., p 197.

Her gardens and their decoration, which was the result of her refined taste, display the cultural attainments of that period and form a very interesting chapter of the Mughal history.

Painting. In the court of Akbar there developed a very exquisite and fine school of painting. Besides portraits the artists of Akbar's court strove to illustrate the books prepared by calligraphers. Mansur and Jagan Nath were the well-known painters of this period. Akbar's court had Indian as well as foreign artists. The two schools interacted and the result was the emergence of the Mughal school of painting. The manuscripts of many illustrated books prepared under Akbar's patronage are to be found in the libraries of the East and the West.

So far as the patronage of this art is concerned, Jahangir[20] was the true successor of his father. In this period the art of painting reached the zenith of its glory. Under him the quality of the pictures improved. After Jahangir the decay of the Mughal school of painting started. Shah Jahan was fond of architecture. While Jahangir could point out[21] the painter of each portrait out of a collection finished by various artists, Shah Jahan had a very keen eye for imposing buildings. This passionate lover of art was a great critic as well.

Jahangir would often get his portraits prepared and sent to the neighbouring rulers.[22] Whenever Jahangir moved[23] in his vast dominion, he used to keep artists with him. Whatever flower or bird or animal or natural scenery appealed the Emperor or his equally gifted consort Noor Jahan, it was at once ordered to be preserved on paper in gorgeous colours by the painters. When the events of twelve years of Jahangir's reign were completely recorded by the Emperor in his *Tuzk*, also called "Jahangir Nama," he ordered the scribes of

20. Every art develops under liberal patronage. It was all the more true in the medieval days. In Mughal India different arts developed under the patronage of the Emperor and his nobility. Jahangir and his talented consort Noor Jahan generously patronised the artists. The art of painting flourished in his court due to his generosity. He excelled his illustrious father in honouring the painters. For instance in 1609 he gave two thousand rupees to Farrukh Beg the painter, who was unrivalled in the age (از _ . بدلان عصر است) [*Tuzk*, Text, p. 76, ***Tuzk*** **(R. & B.), Vol, I**, p. 159.

21. ***Tuzk*** **(R. & B.),** Vol. I, p. 20.

22. **Ibid., Vol. II, p. 36**, 37.

23. **Ibid., p. 108.**

his library to prepare[24] a number of copies of this book. He wanted to circulate them among his special courtiers. Abul Hasan, the painter who held the title of Nadir-uz-Zaman,[25] drew the picture of the Emperor's accession as the frontispiece to this book. As the picture was worthy of all praise, he received endless favours. Mansur Naqqash,[26] another master painter, held the title of Nadir-ul-Asr.

The first copy of the book was given to Shah Jahan, who was a favourite of Noor Jahan at that time (1618). The next two copies were given to Itimad-ud-Daulah called Madar-ul-Mulk, (the Centre of the Kingdom) and Asaf Khan styled "Farzandi" (my son). It may be remembered that the former was the father and the latter the brother of the Empress. It is apparent that they were honoured at the instance of Noor Jahan.

In 1029/1620 when the Imperial couple was staying at Kashmir, Jahangir ordered that a picture gallery be set up in a building within the garden.[27] It was decorated with pictures made by unique painters of the age. The portraits of Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Abbas of Persia were decorated at very prominent places. Next to them were the pictures of Mirza Hakim, Mirza Kamran, Murad and Daniyal. In the second row the pictures of the Amirs and grandees of the court were displayed. On the outer walls the stages of the roads to Kashmir were recorded. It reveals the taste of this artist couple. Noor Jahan, who was herself an artist and painter, must have taken a lion's share in the organisation of this exhibition. A poet determined the year of its organisation by the following hemistich:

مجلس شاهان سلیمان حشم

1029/1620

["The assembly of the kings of Solomon-like glory."]

The portraits of Jahangir, Noor Jahan and other members of the Royal household are available in different museums, libraries and private collections of the East and the West. They represent the interest of these people in preserving their physical personality through the art of painting. On the inner walls of Noor Jahan's tomb, prepared under her own supervision, there are some panels of floral painting and geometrical designs. Their shades and colours are

24. Ibid., pp. 26, 27.
25. Ibid., p. 20.
26. Ibid.
27. *Tuzk* (Syed's text), p. 308; *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 162.

still praised and appreciated by the visitors. They reveal that Noor Jahan's interest in paintings was not less than that of her Imperial consort, and she patronised the artists and painters.

Music and Dancing. The musicians and dancers generally thronged the Royal palaces. On ceremonial and festive occasions the poets, musicians and dancers appeared in the Royal courts and were profusely awarded. Generally the royal concubines were given training in the art of singing and dancing.

In the year 1614 Jahangir heard that Bakhter Khan Kalawant,[28] an expert singer, had arrived in Lahore in the garb of a darvesh. He was the preceptor of Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur.

Jahangir called him to his court, heard his music and gave him Rs. 10,000 in cash, fifty pieces of cloth and a string of pearls. He was made a guest of Asaf Khan. Jahangir expresses doubts whether the man came in this wretched condition to secure secrets of the Mughal court.

Jahangir himself had his own court musicians. He talks of the death of Lal Kalawant[29] in 1608 at a ripe old age. He had been in the Royal court since his father's time

While describing the events of the year 1616, the Emperor mentions Shauqi, the mandolin player (طنبوره نواز) . He calls him the wonder of the age. He could sing Hindi and Persian songs "in a manner that clears the rust from the hearts" (زنگ از دلها می زداید). The Emperor gave him the title of Anand Khan.[30]

From the instances narrated above it appears that among the Fine Arts music also enjoyed Imperial patronage. The way in which Jahangir praises[31] Tan Sen, a musician of his father's court or the sorrow he expresses at the demise of Lal Kalawant[32] reveals Jahangir's attachment with music. The close association between the Emperor and the Empress in 1611 leads us to infer that they both heard the music of Bakhter Khan Kalawant together. Similarly, the title of Anand Khan must have been conferred upon Shauqi in consultation with Noor Jahan.

28. *Tuzk* (R. & B.). Vol I, pp. 271-2. Bakhter Khan was an expert in singing *Dhurpat*, which is a kind of Indian music. Ibrahim Adil Shah II, who died in 1626, was so much emanoured by the musician that he married him his brother's daughter. This king was a patron of the historian Firishta and composed *Nauras*, a treatise on music. See footnote 1, p. 272 (R. &. B).

29. Ibid., p 1 0.

30. *Tuzk* (Syed's text), p. 162 ; *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 331.

31. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. I, p. 413.

32. Ibid , p. 150.

Chapter 16

NOOR JAHAN'S LITERARY ATTAINMENTS

Noor Jahan belonged to a family that was known for its literary and academic attainments. She inherited a sparkling personality from her parents and her temperament was quite suitable for art and poetry. The company of her husband of academic and artistic temperament further stimulated her inborn qualities. Jahangir himself eulogises her qualities of head and heart. The authors of *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangir*, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, and *Maathir-ul-Umera* are unanimous in depicting her as a sparkling personality of subtlety and spontaneity. Some of the anecdotes relating to the wit and humour of this talented lady are reproduced below.

(1) Once Jahangir changed his dress. He wore a silken long coat (قبا) with a precious ruby used as a button. This spectacle led to a spontaneous retort in the form of this verse.

تراز تکمهٔ لعل است برقبائے حریر

شده است قطرهٔ خون منت گریبان گیر

(2) Once the royal couple had gone up the terrace of the palace to see the appearance of the Eid moon. When it was sighted, Jahangir recited the following hemistich :

هلال عید براوج فلک هویدا شد

Noor Jahan spontaneously composed the second hemistich:

کلید مے کده گم گشته بود پیدا شد[1]

Sir Thomas William Beale compiled his Persian history (*Miftah-ul-Tawarikh*) which is a biographical dictionary of Oriental personalities. This book gives a large number of instances of Noor Jahan's witty remarks. Some of them are reproduced here:

(1) Once Jahangir and Noor Jahan met after an interval of a few days. Tears of joy trickled down the eyes of Noor Jahan. This

1. *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Vol. I, p. 270 ; *Miraat-ul-Khayal*, p. 129.

led Jahangir to remark spontaneously :

گوہر زاشک چشم تو غلطیدہ مے رود

Noor Jahan at once retorted :

آبے کہ بے تو خوردہ ام از دیدہ مے رود

(2) In Muharran 1028 a meteor appeared on the horizon. Having seen it Noor Jahan remarked :

ستارہ نیست بدین طول سربرآوردہ

فلک بہ شاطری شہ کمر برآوردہ

(3) Once Talib Amli, the poet laureate of Jahangir's court, fell under royal disfavour and was imprisoned. He sent this verse to Noor Jahan from the prison:

زشرم آب شدم آب راشکستے نیست

بحیر تم کہ مرا آبروے ازچہ شکست

Noor Jahan spontaneously remarked[2]:

یخ بست و بشکست

The compilation of poetry seems to have been a hobby among the educated and cultured upper strata of the society. From them this practice passed on to the educated middle classes also. In the Royal house almost everybody appears to have developed the taste for poetry. They used to study the poetical compilation of the various Persian poets, making their own selections of the big and bulky Diwans (collections of poetry) in their note-books. Most of them could compose verses and many of them were quite good poets whose verses are not less than the compositions of contemporary poets of established fame. Out of the members of the Royal family, Mirza Kamran, the second son of Emperor Zahir-ud-Din Babur, has left a Diwan which is a compilation of a very rich and relishing poetry. It was edited and published by Professor Mahfuz-ul-Haque of Presidency College, Calcutta.

The ladies of the Royal household did not lag behind their menfolk. It is very strange that whenever she turned her attention towards the compilation of poetry, the تخلص (*nom de plume*) of مخفی (*Makhfi*, i.e. the concealed one) was attributed towards her. Noor Jahan could not escape this. The following two of her verses

2. *Miftah-ul-Tawarikh*, p. 314.

are given in the *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*,[3] the *Maathir-ul-Umera*[4] and *Miraat-ul-Khayal*[5]:

دل بصورت ندهم ناشده سیرت معلوم
بندهٔ عشقم و هفتاد و دو ملت معلوم
زاهدا هول قیامت مفگن در دل ما
هول هجران گزرانديم قیامت معلوم[6]

The following two quatrains are also attributed to Noor Jahan by *Miftah-ul-Tawarikh*, although no other history or Tazkirah (biographical dictionary of the poets) gives this information:

(1)

کشاد غنچه اگر از نسیم گلزار است
کلید قفل دل ما تبسم یار است
نه گل شناسد و نه رنگ و بو نه عارض و زلف
دل کسے که بحسن و ادا گرفتار است

(2)

چو بردارم ز رخ برقعه زگل فریاد برخیزد
زنم برزلف اگر شانه زسنبل داد برخیزد
باین حسن و کمالاتے چو در گلشن گذر سازم
زجان بلبلان شور مبارکباد برخیزد

The following verse of Noor Jahan shows her attachment with Lahore, where she spent a large portion of her life and which became her burial spot after her death:

لاهور را بجان برابر خریده ایم
جان داده ایم و جنت دیگر خریده ایم

Another verse depicting her desire about her burial place is also attributed to her :

بر مزار ما غریبان نے چراغے نے گلے
نے پر پروانه سوزد نے سراید بلبلے

As we have already seen, Noor Jahan compiled her poetry under the *nom de plume Makhfi*. This *takhallus* was employed by almost all the princesses, perhaps due to the fact that they were all concealed

. Vol. I, p. 270.
4. Vol. I, p. 164.
5. P. 532.
6. Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 270.

from the public eye and lived the life of retirement and segregation. A book entitled *Diwan-i-Makhfi* (a collection of the poetical compilation of Makhfi) is very popular and has been published many a time *Makhfi* here is Zeb-un-Nisa, the talented daughter of Aurangzeb. But the Diwan may have preserved in it the compilations of other Makhfis. Professor Mahfooz ul-Haque[7] of Presidency College, Calcutta, has expressed the view that *Diwan-i-Makhfi* is the compilation of Makhfi Rishti, an Iranian male poet, who came here in search of wealth like so many other writers, poets and scholars. He unfortunately could not get any service, was involved in some trouble and imprisoned

7. *Maarif*, Vol. II, No. 5.

Chapter 17

ANECDOTES OF NOOR JAHAN

The dazzling personality of the Imperial consort has left an indelible mark on the popular mind, and has become the centre of a large number of anecdotes and stories.

In Lahore even now the people of our older generation narrate the stories of Jahangir and Noor Jahan's justice, kind-heartedness and magnanimity. Urdu literature has preserved many of such stories. Maulana Shibli,[1] the well-known Urdu historian and critic, has versified a story of Jahangir's justice in a case in which Noor Jahan was the accused. It runs as follows:

Once when Noor Jahan was having a stroll in her imperial garden, which was closed to males, she noticed a man loitering about. The Empress, in a fit of rage, shot him dead. When the relatives of the deceased came to know of his death, they went and pulled Jahangir's famous "Chain of Justice" for redress. The Emperor was annoyed. He ordered arrest of Noor Jahan and sent the case for trial to the Qazi. The Qazi's verdict was for the execution of the Empress like any other ordinary murderer. The climax of the whole affair was the assent of the Emperor to the Qazi's verdict. Meanwhile all the overtures of the Empress to influence the State officials proved fruitless. At last the inherent prudence carried the day. She pointed out that if the dependants of the deceased agreed, as is provided by the Islamic law, she could pay the blood-money to them in lieu of her life. The Qazi accepted the proposal provided the Empress paid the money from her own purse (and not from the Royal Exchequer). The Emperor approved of this decision only when he was convinced that the dependants of the deceased had voluntarily agreed to it without any external pressure. During this period Jahangir did not face the Empress, lest her affection should stand in the way of justice. After her release he went to her apartments, and the intensity of the

1 *Mazamin-i-Shibli*, pp. 70-2; *Noor Jahan*, (Ferozsons), pp. 31-3.

affection for the Queen led the Emperor to utter these words:

تو اگر کشته شدی آه چه می کردم من

["Had you been executed, what would have been my fate?"]

This theme depicting that Jahangir's affection for the Empress could not segregate the Emperor from the sense of duty, has also been the theme of many novels, films and dramas.

Here is another very interesting anecdote which I have come across:[2]

In Agra there was a young jeweller, who had lost his mother in his early life. When he grew into a young man, he used to inquire from his relatives about the features and personality of his mother, as he could not recollect how she looked. Many a time he would weep for hours for his mother. While talking about his mother once a lady told him that his mother was exactly like the Queen Empress. Having heard this the young man became desirous of casting a glance on the Queen to formulate an idea about the person of his mother. He mentioned it to his wife, and asked her to make a plan of taking him stealthily to the Meena Bazar so that he may have a glimpse of the Empress. It may not be irrelevant to point out here that the Empress observed strict Purdah and no alien eye could see her. Every now and then Meena Bazars were held in the Royal palace. The wives of leading merchants and business men used to set up shops. Many a time even ladies of the nobility opened shops just as a fun. The bazar was resorted to by the Queen, princesses and ladies from high families. The Emperor and sometimes the royal princes were the only male visitors.

The jeweller's wife, who used to open a shop in the Meena Bazar, declined the proposal out of the fear of the Imperial wrath.

He pondered over the matter for quite a long time and finally decided to visit the Meena Bazar in female attire. As an experiment, one day he put on a female dress and in a palanquin went to his own house, posing as the Begum of a Royal grandee. He expressed a desire to see the finest and choicest types of jewellery. His own wife seated him in the drawing room and displayed before him all the precious stones that were available in the house. He discussed their qualities and prices with her. The disguise was so masterly that even his wife could not recognise him. Upon this he

2. *Noor Jahan* (Ferozesons), pp. 33-8.

felt satisfied and relieved; when his own wife could not recognise him, how was it possible for others to detect him? He revealed himself to his wife, discussed the problem again, and she gave in and agreed.

Next time, when a Meena Bazar was held, both of them went there. The wife worked at the counter in their jewellery shop in the Meena Bazar, while her husband, of course in complete female attire, remained within the shop near the show cases. On her round through the Bazar, when the Empress reached the jewellery shop, she instantaneously recognised the man and hid her face. This was the height of intelligence and acuteness of observation. She informed the Emperor that there was a male in the shop. The Emperor laughed and would not believe this. Noor Jahan persisted in her assertion and suggested a test. She ordered a canal to be dug round the Bazar with water flowing in it. After this was done the attendants of the Bazar were asked to go out. The royal eunuchs were ordered to watch how each one of them crossed the canal. A woman would necessarily wade through it after pulling up the pyjama, sari or lehnga, while a man would just jump over it.

It happend as the Empress had expected. The jeweller jumped over and was arrested by Urdu Beganis (women guards). The culprit was presented in the Royal Court before the angry Emperor. Before the Emperor could give an order, his wife appeared in the Court and prayed, "O ! the world refuge, I am to be punished for this crime. He is innocent. I took him there."

Noor Jahan was sitting behind the curtain at the back of the Emperor's throne. Her right hand was on the back of the Emperor. On the Empress's suggestion the Emperor asked the young man the reason of his entry in the Meena Bazar. He replied with folded hands, "My Lord, I lost my mother when I was in tender age. I have no recollection of how she looked. Somebody told me that the Empress has a very close resemblance with my mother. I wanted to have a look at the august person of the Queen to refresh the faded vision of my mother. This fond desire led me to this crime. I may please be excused." Having heard this the large-hearted Empress ordered that his handcuffs and chains be removed. "When he considers me as his mother, I also regard him as my son" He was excused and set at liberty.

This reaction was much appreciated by the courtiers and the general public. It all the more endeared her in their estimate.

Chapter 18

JAHANGIR'S DEATH AND NOOR JAHAN'S LAST EFFORTS

It was March 1627. Emperor Jahangir and his Empress Noor Jahan were staying at Lahore. The decaying health of the Emperor had rendered him so delicate that he could not bear the heat of the approaching summer. He decided to leave for Kashmir along with his retinue, which included Asaf Khan, Shahriyar and Khusrau's son Dawar Bakhsh.

Even at Kashmir he fared no better. His disease, asthma, took such violent and serious turn that the physicians became hopeless. He, however, showed some signs of recovery and the fatal end which was considered imminent was postponed.

Although the Emperor had survived the severe attack, yet the disease lingered on. He continued to loose his vitality. His appetite completely vanished. Even opium would not agree with him. He could endure only a few cups of grape wine. It was impossible for him to write. He could move about only in a palanquin.[1]

Illness of Shahriyar. Unfortunately for Noor Jahan, her son-in-law, Prince Shahriyar, fell suddenly ill at such an inopportune time. He was attacked by *Dau-th-thalab* (داوالثعلب) (Fox's disease which is a species of leprosy). The hair of his body fell off.

The physicians could not cure him. Later on he was advised to move from the cold climate of Kashmir to the warmth of Lahore. The prince came over to Lahore, leaving company of his mother-in-law, Noor Jahan, at such a critical juncture.[2]

Emperor's Return Journey to Lahore. Shortly after, the Emperor himself decided to leave for Lahore. Pershaps he was persuaded by the Empress to do so, as she must have Prince Shahriyar near the imperial bed when Jahangir breathed his last. As the Emperor

1. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 290-1 (Elliot, Vol. VI, p. 435). See also Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 388.

2. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 291.

reached Bairamkala he felt a desire for hunting. It was destined to be his last hunting expedition.

Bairamkala is now a small place comprising of only a few houses. Sir Richard Temple[3] describes it as "a sweet spot, almost the nicest I was ever encamped upon." It is situated close to a hill torrent called "Chitta Pani" (white water). At such a fascinating place the Emperor wanted to entertain himself. He sat at the bottom of a high hill, resting his matchlock on a high wall which had been constructed for the purpose. The country people were driving the game within the range of the Emperor's aim. He fixed his aim at a deer.

Meanwhile a tragic accident took place. A foot-soldier, busy in gathering the game for the Emperor, ran so close to a precipice that his foot slipped. He tumbled down the mountain side and dashed to pieces. This sight shook the Emperor. He called for the mother of the deceased and gave her some money. But his depression and dejection could not be lightened. The death of the young man made him fancy his own death hovering about. He sank into despair. He could no longer sleep or feel at ease for a moment.

The next day the imperial caravan encamped near Thanah.

According to Jahangir[4] this stage formed the climatic, linguistic and cultural boundary between Kashmir and the plains. The next stage was Rajauri, which is situated on the bank of the river Tawi. The caravan left Rajauri towards the close of the day.

On the way the condition of the Emperor further deteriorated. He showed alarming symptoms. He called for a cup of wine. It was placed at his lips but he was unable to drink. At long last he expired[5] in the early hours of the morning of 27 Safar 1037 (28 October 1627) when the cavalcade had reached Chingiz Hatli (or Chingas Serai). He was then fifty-eight solar years old.

The Struggle for Succession. The Emperor's death brought all speculations about his successor to an end. Now it was the time to strike finally. Noor Jahan called the nobles to a conference. Asaf Khan who was always at heart a partisan of Shah Jahan realised the dangerous outcome of this conference. He took measures to

3. *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 19.
4. *Tuzk* (R. & B.), Vol. II, p. 180.
5. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 292-3 (Elliot, Vol. VI, p. 435); *Padshah Nama* of Abdul Hamid, Vol. I, p. 69 (Elliot, Vol. VII, p. 5); Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 338.

prevent this meeting. He placed the Empress herself under strict guard. Noor Jahan was, no doubt, a master diplomat, but in the absence of her husband and due to the opposition of her own brother she was bound to fail. Asaf Khan despatched an express runner, a Hindu Banarasi by name, with his signet ring to Shah Jahan in the Deccan. What he should do till the arrival of Shah Jahan from the Deccan, was the main problem before Asaf Khan. He placed Dawar Bakhsh (also called Bulaqi) son of Khusrau on the throne, as a mere scapegoat. He also took the sons of Shah Jahan out of Noor Jahan's apartments. All this was done on the very day of the Emperor's death at Chingiz Hatli. The next day they reached Bhimbhar. Here the Khutbah was formally read in the name of Dawar Bakhsh. The corpse of Jahangir was sent to Lahore, under the supervision of Maqsud Khan and other trusted dignitaries, for burial at Shahdara.

Shahriyar's Attempt for Sovereignty. Even before the body of the late Emperor was laid to rest, swords had been drawn to contest the succession to his throne. Noor Jahan was no doubt placed under guard by her dearly loved brother, Asaf Khan, who owed his rise to power to her recommendations. Despite these guards Noor Jahan contrived to send a message to Shahriyar to collect as many soldiers as he could and hasten towards her. This message together with the tactics of his ambitious and intriguing wife, urged him to action. He proclaimed himself Emperor at Lahore. He seized the royal treasury and distributed no less than seventy lakhs of rupees to secure the help of the nobility and to enlist soldiers. Mirza Baisanghar, one of the sons of the late Prince Daniyal, joined him. He was appointed commander of his forces.

Asaf Khan and Dawar Bakhsh hurried towards Lahore, keeping themselves one day ahead of Noor Jahan's cavalcade. Shahriyar sent his commander Mirza Baisanghar to stop them. But the inexperienced soldiers of the Mirza could not stand against the old regulars of the State, with the result that they helplessly fled from the battlefield.

Siege of Lahore. Having heard the news of this reverse from a Turkish slave, Shahriyar foolishly shut himself in the Lahore Fort. Asaf Khan marched forward and besieged the Fort. Many of Shahriyar's followers betrayed his cause and deserted him. The next day the imperial army entered the Fort. Shahriyar showed cowardice and took shelter in female apartments. A eunuch brought

him out. He was made to perform the regular bows and pay homage to the makeshift Emperor Dawar Bakhsh.[6]

Later on he was blinded and thrown into prison. Thus ended Shahriyar's struggle for throne. Had Noor Jahan been free to act, she might have prolonged the affair. In the event of Asaf Khan's opposition, the chances of her success were very remote. Her future was sealed and she was destined to lead a retired life after the death of her beloved husband.

Shah Jahan becomes the Emperor. Banarasi[7] reached the Deccan in twenty days and delivered the news of Jahangir's death to Shah Jahan at Junair on 19 Rabi-ul-Awwal 1037 (18 November 1627). He observed a mourning of four days, and made his way to Agra *via* Gujrat. His march to the North was a triumphal procession. The period of his troubles was now over. The dawn of his glory and grandeur had set in.

Shah Jahan received the news of Shahriyar's defeat at Sinur. By the end of November he was staying there to celebrate his lunar birthday.

From Ahmedabad (Gujrat) he sent Khidmat Parast Khan to Lahore with a Farman written in his own hand to Asaf Khan asking him to execute Shahriyar, Dawar Bakhsh, his brother Garshasap, Tehmurith and Hoshang (the sons of Prince Daniyal) in view of political and public considerations.[8]

From Gujrat Shah Jahan went to Rajputana. On 1 January 1628 he reached Golconda, where Rana Karan[9] of Mewar met him and offered him valuable presents. He was given the rank of 5000 Zat and 5000 Sawar.

On 14 January Shah Jahan reached Ajmer. He paid a visit to the shrine of Hazrat Muin-ud-Din Chishti and gave orders for the construction of a marble mosque close to the tomb. After appoint

6. *Iqbal Nama*, pp. 295-7 (E. & D), Vol. VI, pp. 436-7); Kamboh, Vol. I, pp. 160-2.

7. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 294.

8. Ibid., p. 303, preserves the words of the original farman:

"دراین هنگام که آسمان آشوب طلب و زمین فتنه خیزاست اگر داور بخش
پسر خسرو و برادر و ناشدنی و پسران شاهزاده دانیال را آوارهٔ صحرائی
عدم ساخته دولت خواهان را از توزع خاطر و شورش دل فارغ سازند -
بصلاح و صواب قرین تو خواهد بود"

9. Abdul Hamid Lahori, Vol. I, p. 80.

ing Mahabat Khan as the Governor of Ajmer, he set out for Agra.

Khutbah Read in Shah Jahan's Name. On arrival of Amanullah and Bayazid, the emissaries of Shah Jahan, at Lahore, Asaf Khan, after consulting other nobles, decided to read the Khutbah in Shah Jahan's name on 19 January 1628. Dawar Bakhsh, the scapegoat ruler, was put in prison by the clever juggler Asaf Khan. Two days later Khidmat Parast Khan arrived with the second *Farman.* In order to act upon it Asaf Khan got killed five innocent[10] princes unnecessarily. They were Dawar Bakhsh, his brother Gurshasp, Shahriyar, Tahmurath and Hoshang, the sons of Daniyal (a brother of Jahangir).

Coronation of Shah Jahan. On Monday,[11] 4 February 1628, the Coronation Ceremony of Shah Jahan took place at Agra at the auspicious time fixed by astrologers amidst great festivities. He displayed his generosity and awarded the courtiers, poets, astrologers and Ulema very richly. He adopted the lofty and high-sounding title of Abul Muzaffar Shihab-ud-Din Muhammad Shah Jahan Sahib Qiran Thani (ابو المظفر شہاب الدین محمد شاہ جہاں صاحب قران ثانی) Abdul Hamid Lahori remarks that Shah Jahan adopted the title of Shihab-ud-Din on the suggestion of Asaf Khan. Thus the efforts of Asaf Khan were crowned with success and his patron-sister Noor Jahan was destined to lead the life of retirement.

After Asaf Khan, Mahabat Khan was the man to be honoured. He got the rank of 7000 Zat and 7000 Swar (do aspa sih aspa) and the title of Khan-i-Khanan.

10. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Iqbal Nama*, p. 303.

11. For a detailed account of Shah Jahan's accession see Abdul Hamid, *Badshah Nama*, Vol. I, pp. 82-99, and *Aml-i-Saleh*, Vol. I, pp. 169-77.

Chapter 19

JAHANGIR'S BURIAL AND HIS LAST RESTING PLACE

The death of Jahangir at Chingaz Hatli[1] near Rajauri on 27 Safar 1037 (28 October 1627) let loose the political tussles for the realisation of the political dreams and ambitions of various aspirants for political ascendancy. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the most important actors on this new stage were Noor Jahan and her brother Asaf Khan.

Despite these tussles the dead body of the late ruler was not neglected. By the roadside the corpse was given the last wash and was prepared for burial according to the prevalent Muslim rites. At Chingas Serai, close to the Mughal mosque, there is a grave on a platform with a green flag fluttering over it. The common people take it to be Jahangir's grave. It is said that the last bath to the body was given here and the entrails, ripped out to save the corpse from early decomposition were entombed here.[2] The Royal coffin was sent to Lahore for a befitting burial, properly escorted by soldiers and attendants. Due to civil war between Dawar Bakhsh and Shahriyar it was not possible to give the Emperor a befitting funeral. He was, however, laid in his grave[3] in the Dilkusha Garden of Noor Jahan near Shahdara. Kamboh,[4] a court historian of Shah Jahan, does not attribute this garden to the Empress.

1. Chingas Hatli (also called Chingas Serai) is a small village with a serai of the Mughal days. It is situated on the Bhimber-Srinagar route, between Nowshahra and Rajauri about fifteen miles south of the latter (see *Kashir*, Vol. I, p. 262).

2. Ibid.

3. *Iqbal Nama* p. 294 (Elliot, Vol VI, pp. 435-6); Abdul Hamid, Vol. I, p. 69 (Elliot, Vol. VII, pp. 5, 6; Latif, *Lahore*, p. 106.

4. Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 11. The Emperor was buried in one of the gardens on the other side of the river.

در یکی از باغات آن روی آب

Thornton,[5] Fergusson[6] and Percy Brown[7] say that Empress Noor Jahan got the mausoleum of Jahangir constructed. This information is erroneous and is based on a local tradition, that Shah Jahan neglected the grave of his father and it was given a befitting mausoleum by the Empress. The Empress was practically a prisoner of her brother after the death of Jahangir. He brought her to Lahore, no doubt with proper respect, but kept her under regular and strict vigil till the coronation of the new Emperor Shah Jahan was solemnised.

The mausoleum[8] of Jahangir was constructed as a State building under royal orders. Noor Jahan was leading a retired life at that time. It took ten years to complete the mausoleum, at a cost of 10 lakhs of rupees. It is a matchless building, second perhaps to none but Taj Mahal of Agra.

5. Thornton, *Lahore*.
6. Fergusson, *Architecture*, Vol. II.
7. *Indion Architecture (Islamic Period)*, p. 108.
8. Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 11.

Chapter 20

NOOR JAHAN AFTER JAHANGIR

The demise of Jahangir was a heart-rending[1] event for Noor Jahan. Besides the loss of her Imperial consort she suffered a great setback in the field of politics. Her brother Asaf Khan who owed his early rise to the patronage of the Empress brought her to Lahore as a political prisoner. Her nominee to the throne, her son-in-law Shahriyar, suffered a defeat. She heard about his having been rendered blind and later on executed. These events, coming one after the other, were extremely sad. There was, however, no other alternative but to remain patient. She had to spend the rest of her life in retirement and seclusion. Shah Jahan fixed an annual pension[2] of rupees two lakhs for her expenses. Besides that she had a large amount of personal wealth. But her own widowhood with that of her daughter frustrated her very much. She spent the rest of her life in Lahore in her personal house within the city. She used to spend lavishly on the needy and the poor. It is said that the young daughters of the poor were financially helped by her for their marriage. She herself led a very simple life wearing only black garments. She was often seen visiting the grave of her beloved husband accompanied by her slave-girls and attendants.

Noor Jahan was destined to live as a dejected widow for eighteen long years. During this period many important events took place. Her niece Mumtaz Mahal, who is said to have been second to none but Noor Jahan in beauty and whose husband Shah Jahan was successful in getting the throne for him, died on the night of Wednesday, 7 June 1631,[3] at Burhanpur in the Deccan. Her memory is celebrated by the famous mausoleum Taj Mahal. How tragic are the worldly affairs. Arjmund Bano Mumtaz who

1. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 294, Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, pp. 389-90.
2. Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 618; *Maathir*, Vol. I, pp. 133-4.
3. Abdul Hamid, Vol. I, pp.384-9.

was lucky to become the first lady of the realm died so soon, while Noor Jahan was deprived of that great status, lived on for eighteen long years after the death of her husband.

The authorities allowed Noor Jahan to live in retirement for all this period, although there were rumours current in the country that she was secretly[4] murdered.

This phase of her life was that of piety, generosity and retirement.

Shah Jahan and Asaf Khan came to Lahore many a time during this interval but they did not appear to have met Noor Jahan. In 1641 Asaf Khan died at Lahore. Under Royal orders his tomb was constructed at Shahdara (Lahore) adjacent to the mausoleum of Jahangir. It is situated to the west of the Jalo Khana[5] (جلوخانه) of the Emperor's mausoleum.

It appears that Noor Jahan decided to construct her own tomb towards the south-west of the Emperor's mausoleum, close to the tomb of Asaf Khan. Noor Jahan survived her more fortunate brother Asaf Khan only by four years. She died at Lahore on 29 Shawwal 1055[6] (18 December 1645). She was laid to rest in the tomb constructed by her for herself.

4. *English Factories in India, 1624-29*, pp. 240-2.

5. Kamboh says (Vol. II, p. 266)

" و فرمان شد که غربی روضهٔ جنت مکانی در زمین متصل چوک جلو
مدفون ساخته گنبدِ عالی از سنگ مرمر برتربتش بنا نمایند۔ "

Abdul Hamid, Vol. II, p. 257.

6. *Badshah Nama*, Vol. II, p. 475.

Chapter 21

THE TOMB OF NOOR JAHAN

It has been described in a previous chapter that Noor Jahan spent the long period of eighteen years after her husband in the city of Lahore. This was a period of retirement, prayers, piety, charity and social service. Her brother, a former protege and a later rival, died in 1641 and, under the orders of Shah Jahan, was buried[1] quite adjacent to the Jalo Khana (جلو خانه) of Jahangir's mausoleum. It appears that the end of Asaf Khan led her to lay the foundation of her own tomb. She could not expect Shah Jahan to give her a similar burial place as for his benefactor and father-in-law, Asaf Khan. Towards the south-west of the Imperial tomb and close to that of Asaf Khan, she started the construction of a tomb.

Jahangir is said to have been buried in Dilkusha Garden of Noor Jahan. After the construction of the mausoleum, it ceased to be a private garden. It appears that Noor Jahan either founded a new garden for her in the vicinity of the mausoleum of her husband, or she already possessed another garden at Shahdara. In the Mughal period there were long rows of gardens on the banks of the river Ravi.

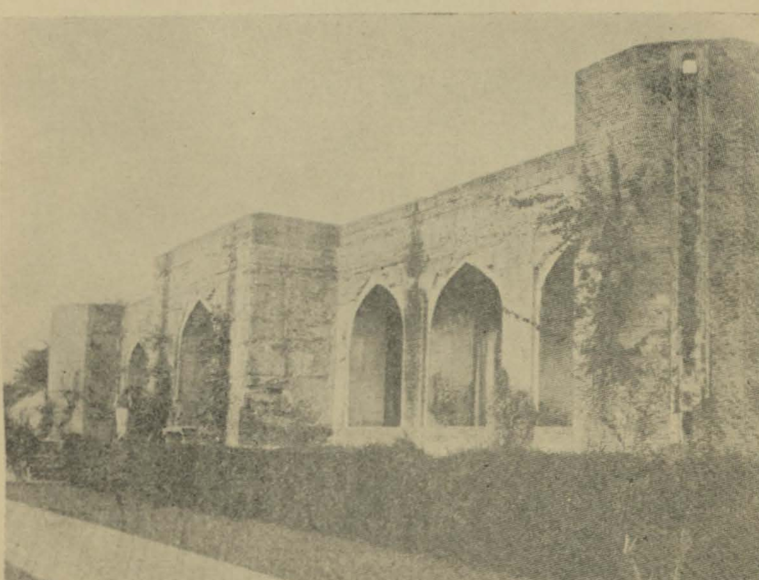
The local tradition has it that the second garden mentioned above was called "Char Chaman" (چار چمن) or "Four Parked Gardens." This garden contained summer houses and pavilions, which were utilised by the late Empress whenever she came from Lahore to Shahdara to pay a visit to the mausoleum of her husband. Later on she started the construction of her own tomb under her supervision perhaps four years before her death.

The Pla of the Tomb. Before giving a description of the tomb, let us discuss the plan. During the period of her grandeur Noor Jahan founded the tomb of her father Itimad-ud-Daulah at Agra.

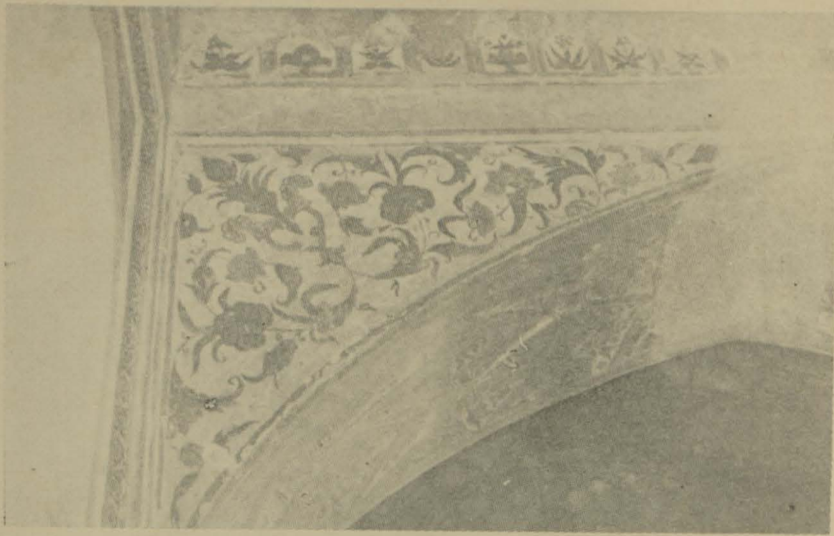
1. Abdul Hamid, Vol. II, pp. 257, 475-6; Kamboh, Vol. II, p. 266.



A General vew of Noor Jahan's Tomb

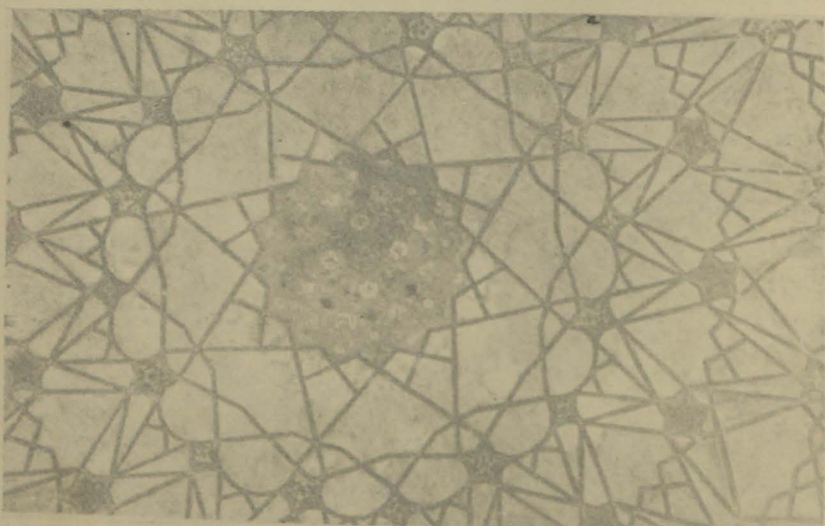


Noor Jahan's Tomb



The Floral decoration on an arch of Noor Jahan's Tomb

PLATE NO. 9



"Gulkari" on the Ceiling of a part of the Second gallery of Noor Jahan's Tomb

This tomb is a very fine piece of architecture, built of white marble and embellished with pietra-dura work. Although it is a very small structure, yet it is unique for its artistic qualities. It appears that Noor Jahan followed the plan of the tomb of her father while constructing her own last resting place. Shah Jahan also seems to have followed the same design in constructing Jahangir's mausoleum. Perhaps it was under the advice of Asaf Khan, the son of Itimad-ud-Daulah. Jahangir's mausoleum, however, is a bigger structure. The four minarets on its four corners are very tall and majestic. The minarets of Itimad-ud-Daulah's tomb are comparatively smaller. Moreover, the outer walls of Itimad-ud-Daulah's tomb and its facade are decorated with very fine pietra-dura work. On the roof of Jahangir's tomb the central platform was covered with a sarcophagus which was exactly over the grave of the Emperor. This is now missing. Over the roof of I imad-ud-Daulah's tomb there is a Bara Dari or pavilion with twelve doors, three on each side. The doors are covered with very fine marble lattice-work. The dome is not of a higher type and is decorated with two spires. The skeleton of Noor Jahan's tomb as it exists today clearly brings out the point that the tomb was built after the design of the tombs of Jahangir and Itimad-ud-Daulah.[2]

The outer walls of Noor Jahan's tomb are now denuded of the stone covering. The inner structure of brick and mortar is quite visible. The four corners are equal in height to the upper surface. They are uncovered. If we analyse the architectural traditions of the Mughal period, we come to the conclusion that there must have been either towers or minarets on the four corners. The central platform of the roof seems to have contained a Bara Dari. The original plan of the inner part can easily be understood. There are three ranges of galleries with thickly plastered walls. After these galleries there is a square room with a platform in the centre, on which there perch two grave cenatophs. The walls and roof of the third gallery still contain very nicely executed panels of fine floral work and geometrical designs. The grave chamber seems to have contained marble lattice walls with entrance on one side. In this arrangement also the pattern of the tombs of Itimad-ud-Daulah and

2. *Ibrat Nama* (compiled in 1854) says that the building of the tomb of Noor Jahan was not completed. Even the incomplete building was ravaged by the Sikhs (Vol. I, p. 72).

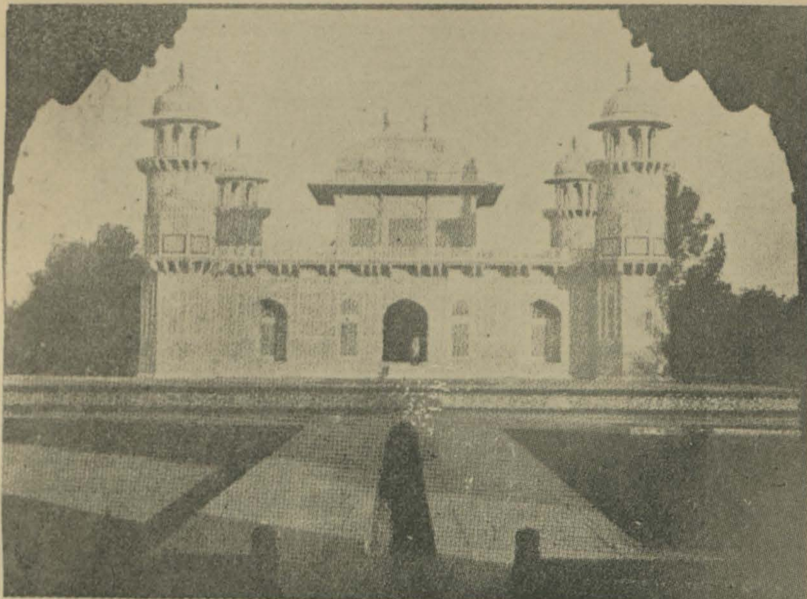
Jahangir was copied. There is an underground chamber. In Mughal India the original grave was made underground and the grave within the inner chamber of the tomb was just a "replica" of the original. In the case of Noor Jahan's tomb, besides the original grave underground, there were two grave cenatophs, one in the inner chamber and the other on the upper storey. The main sarcophagus and its platform appear to have been embellished with very unique specimens of pietra dura-work.

In I imad-ud-Daulah's tomb (Agra) we have very nice pietra-dura work. The sarcophagi of that tomb are simple and unadorned pieces of yellow stone. The sarcophagus of Jahangir's grave[3] along with its platform is covered with a refined pietra-dura work of different colours—very symmetrically, systematically and artistically set. In the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent Jahangir's sarcophagus is the first of its kind. It is so beautiful that no grave is so pleasant to look at. The white surface of the marble, elaborately ornamented with the multicoloured inlay stone-work, not only presents a marvellous spectacle, but creates a sort of relief to our eyes which cannot look continuously towards dazzling white surface of the marble. The sarcophagi of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan in Taj Mahal (Agra) are also of marble embellished with multi-coloured pietra-dura work. When we compare these sarcophagi with that of Jahangir at Lahore, we find the latter more refinely and masterly executed.

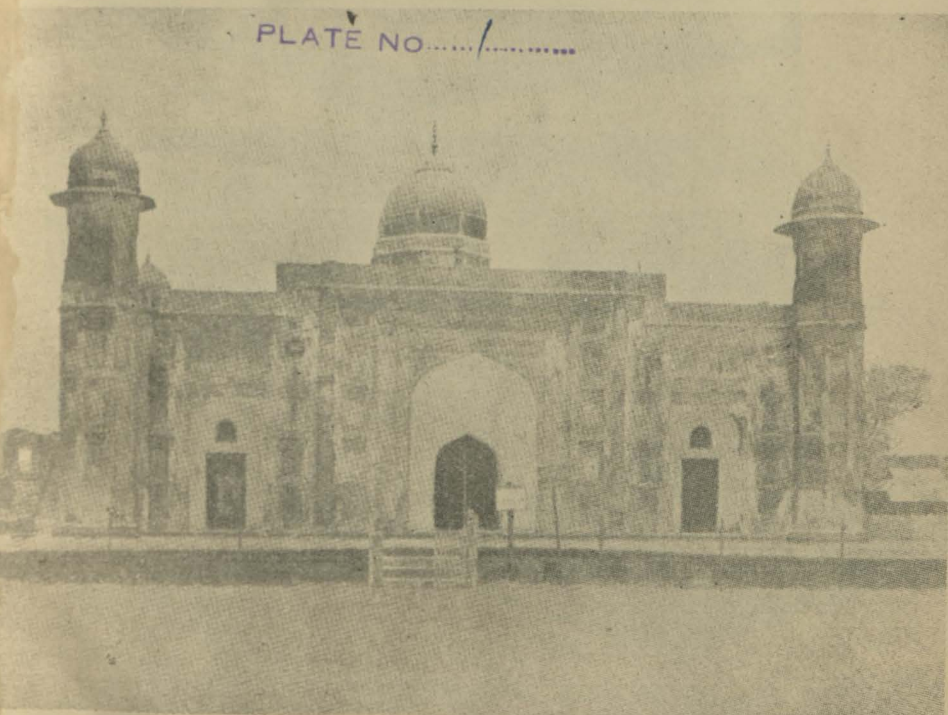
The sarcophagus[4] of Asaf Khan's grave at Lahore presents some very subtle artistic qualities. It is carved out of one piece of marble. The ninety-nine attributes of God and other verses from the Holy Quran are inscribed in a very elegant *Naskh* (نسخ) script. The inlay work is only in black colour. These were the traditions followed in the preparation of sarcophagi in Mughal India immediately before the time when Noor Jahan constructed her own tomb. It is certain that her sarcophagus was adorned with the attributes of God and appropriate verses from the Holy Book.

3. Kamboh, Vol. I, p. 11 :
"برفراز آن چبوترهٔ بست در بست از سنگ مرمر مصنوع
بصنعت پرچین کاری که دقیق تر از خام بندیست مرتب شده۔"

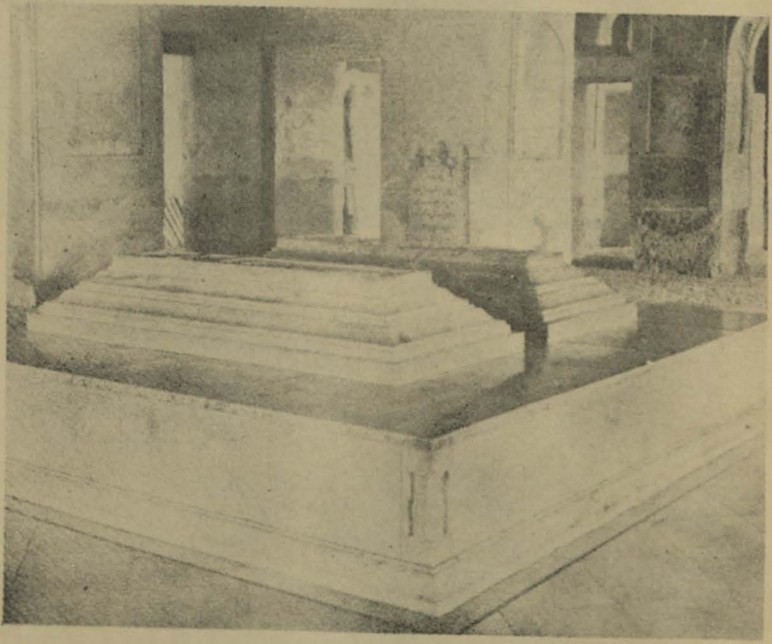
4. See Abdul Hamid, Vol. II, pp. 475-6 for the description of AsifKhan's tomb.



I'timaad-ud-Daula's Tomb, Aagra



Bibi Pari's Lal Bagh Fort, Dacca



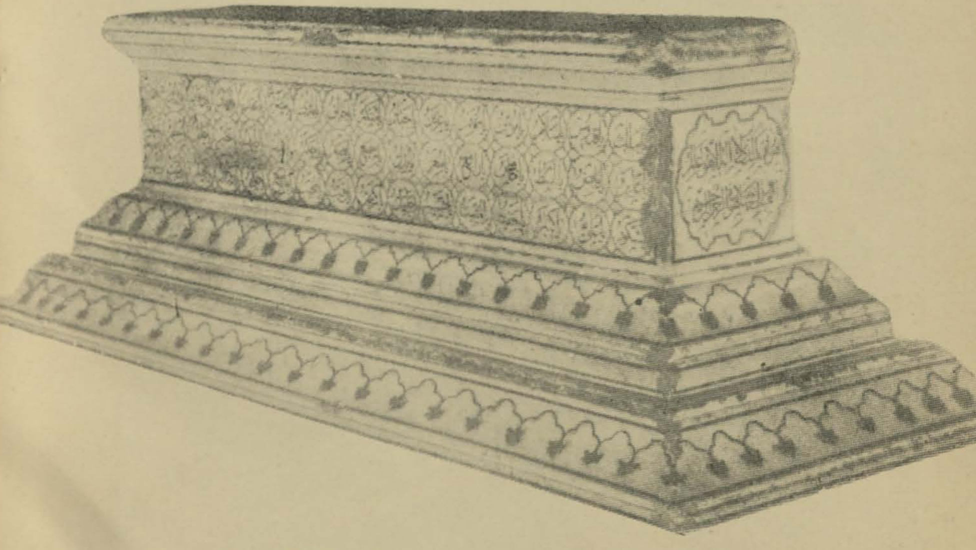
The Present Condition of the Sarcophagi of the graves of Noor Jahan and her daughter Ladli Begum

PLATE NO. 7



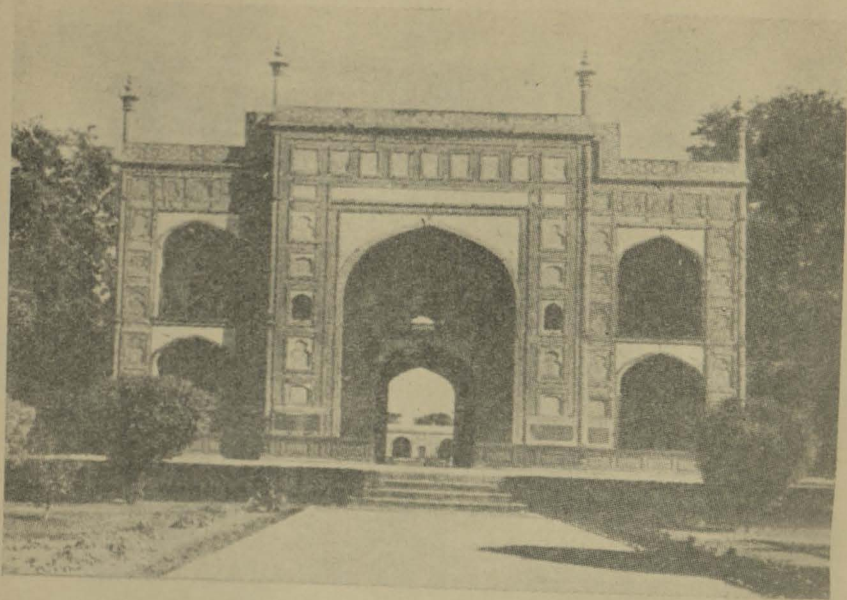
Gateway of Asaf Khan's Tomb

PLATE NO........11........

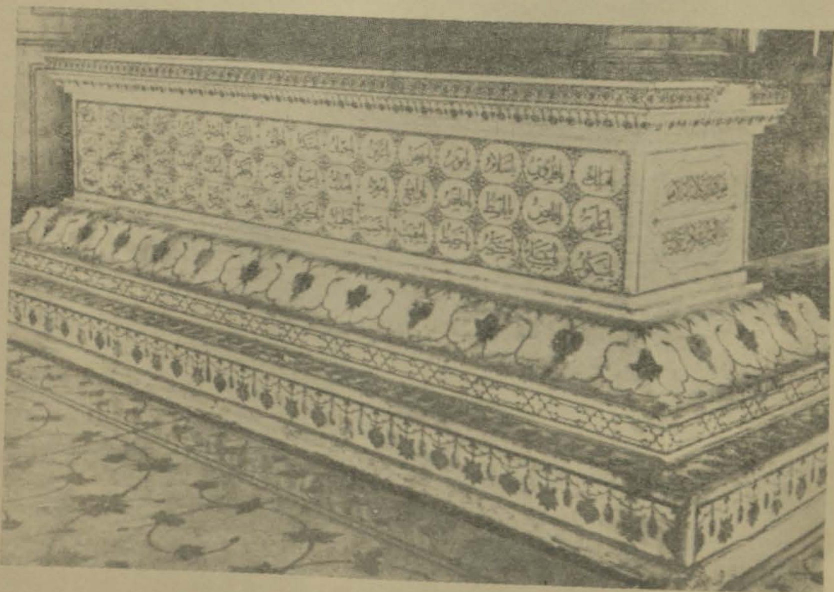


The Marble Sarcophagus of Asaf Khan's grave

PLATE NO........6........



The Entrance gate of Jahangir's Mausoleum



Grave of Jahangir

Whether her sarcophagus was adorned with multicoloured pietra-dura work like that of Jahangir (Lahore) and Mumtaz Mahal (Agra) or it was covered with black-coloured inlay work, we cannot say.

Round this elegant tomb there was a very well arranged garden called "Char Chaman" (چار چمن). It had brick pathways, canals, waterfalls, tanks, fountains with water flowing through them. There were long rows of green cypress trees, tulips, roses and jassamine. Fruit trees of different species, especially date-palms were there. The local traditions tell that there were pavilions and summer houses. According to the prevalent Mughal traditions, there was a lofty and massive boundary wall with two gateways. What was the style of these gates? This we can only conjecture. It may have been like the main gate of Jahangir's mausoleum. It faces the grand open space of Jalo Khana (جلو خانه), also called "Serai". It is a structure of red sandstone, richly inlaid with white marble and other stones. It is also possible that it may have been a structure of brick and mortar masonary like the gates of Asaf Khan's tomb and the Jalo Khana (جلو خانه) of Jahangir's mausoleum.

The Destruction of the Tomb. The bodies of Noor Jahan and he daughter Ladli Begum continued to rest in their graves in the subterranean chamber of a fine tomb of red sandstone and marble with inner galleries decorated with finely executed floral work, set within an artistically arranged garden. There were servants to look after it, and Mullas to recite the Holy Book for the peace and consolation of the departed souls.

After the sudden death of Mir Muinul Mulk, in 1753, a period of chaos and disturbance started. Lahore province became the cockpit of the rising rival parties striving to wield political authority. This clash between the Durranis, the Marathas and the Sikhs ruined the settled government. The conditionswere further aggravated by the selfishness of the self-seeking Mughal nobility. The cities were sacked and rural areas were ravaged. In this period (1753 to 1799) Noor Jahan's tomb was plundered of its rich material which consisted of carpets, curtains, candle-stands and precious objects of various types.

In 1799, Ranjit Singh occupied Lahore and within a decade he established a vast kingdom in the Punjab, later extended

from Phillaur to Jamrud and Kashmir to Multan. Ranjit Singh needed a large amount of bricks, stones and building material for his constructions in Lahore and Amritsar. The ruins of the Mughal quarters provided him a quarry of bricks. The need for more bricks and stones and in some cases religious intolerance led the Sikhs to raze to ground many buildings of historical and religious nature. The number of such buildings was not less than two thousand, according to the estimate of Mufti Ghulam Sarwar.[5] The buildings which were not totally wiped out were denuded of their stones and precious building material. The tombs of Asaf Khan and Noor Jahan were among those relics of the Mughals in Lahore which were hit very hard. The red-stone covering of the outer walls, the Bara Dari and the four corner towers were removed. The sarcophagi and the marble podium were also destroyed. Even the graves were dug open and both the coffins removed. It was expected that precious stones and ornaments were buried with the Empress. But on opening the boxes only the decayed bones were found. In a fit of disappointment they threw away the bones. Later on the bricks of the boundary wall, gateways and the adjoining buildings were removed.[6]

In 1849 when the British occupied the Punjab, the skeleton of the tomb was about to crumble. It was repaired. About 1880, another repair was undertaken under the supervision of Rai Bahadur Kanhaya Lal, an Executive Engineer of Lahore, who is also the author of *Tarikh-i-Lahore*.

During these repairs the roof and the podium in the centre were provided with a new flow. A large part of the facade of the four sides of the tomb was repaired. Some grassy plots with two rows of brick pavements were laid, perhaps a very poor substitute of the "Char Chaman".

Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, the Raja of Burdwan came to Lahore. His family hailed originally from Lahore. He paid a visit to Noor Jahan's tomb and felt very sorry at the pitiable plight of the last resting place of the Empress. He

5. *Tarikh-i-Makhsan-i-Punjab* p. 383. See also Syed Ahmad, p. 463.

6. *Ibrat Nama*, Vol. I, p 72 ; *Tohqiqat-i-Chishti*, pp. 779-80; Kanhaya Lal, pp. 330-1; Latif, pp. 109-10; Baqir , p. 441; Fauq, Lahore Number of *Naqoosh*, pp.277-82.

presented a sum of rupees five thousand to the Government for the repairs of this tomb. These repairs further improved its condition. The year 1904 is of great importance in the history of the ancient monuments of the Indo-Pakistan sub-contintent. Lord Curzon established an Archaeological Department, and arrangements were made for the protection of the ancient monuments. These steps improved the lot of this tomb to a great extent. Caretakers were appointed. Henceforth the herdsmen could not stay under its roof along with their sheep and cattle for taking rest in the noon and at night.

In 1913 Hakim Ajmal Khan, the well-known indigenous physician and political worker, happened to visit the tomb of the Empress. He was so much moved by its wretched condition that he embarked upon a scheme for its improvement. He got a new floor of white and black marble for the grave chamber. Both the graves and the platform were reconstructed in white marble.

In the north-eastern corner of the grave chamber a marble slab is fixed containing the following Persian chronogram:

تاریخ وفات ملکه نورجهاں

پس از فراق ده و هشت سال شد یک جا
روان مهر نسا بیگم و ملک به جنان
به یاد بانوئے هندوستان سر و شم نه گفت
سنین هجرت و تاریخ عیسوی تو امان
هزار و پنجده و پنج رفته از هجرت
بلے به پیش جهانگیر رفته نورجهان
حاذق الملک حکیم حافظ محمد اجمل خان در ۱۹۱۳ع
مطابق ۱۳۳۰ھ این لوح را نصب کردند -

A few years ago the Archaeological Department of the Government of Pakistan prepared a scheme for the renovation of the tomb. After thorough investigation they have started covering the northern facade of the tomb with slabs of red sandstone. By now about half of the work on this side has been completed.

With the completion of this plan, it is hoped that the lost grandeur of this tomb will be restored to a great extent.

Chapter 22

THE CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY OF NOOR JAHAN : A RETROSPECT

No other feminine figure is so fascinating and famous in the annals of India as Noor Jahan. Her name has become the part and parcel of the name of her imperial consort, the artist Emperor Jahangir. Her story is so interesting to read that the popular mind has woven round her many a fantastic and romantic tale, so much so that her personality and history are shrouded in the halo of these popular tales. In this book an attempt has been made to delineate her personality in the light of sober and scientific historical facts.

Noor Jahan was the daughter of an Iranian noble who migrated to Mughal India in search of better surroundings in the Court of Akbar. His talented daughter attained such a supreme place in the harem of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir that she dominated the political horizon for about two decades.

Physical Appearance of the Empress. Noor Jahan is described by almost all the chroniclers to have been a tall, attractive woman of proportionate limbs. Even at the age of thirty-five, she had such charm and grace that the Emperor Jahangir, who happened to see her amidst the celebrations of the Nauroz festival, was enamoured of her. As we have seen in a previous chapter, Jahangir had a large number of Queens and concubines. If a man like him becomes practically "the slave"[2] of a woman, one comes to the natural conclusion that the woman must have possessed extraordinary charm and qualities of head and heart.

Her Mental and Intellectual Qualities. The Empress Noor Jahan possessed a sharp intellect and a subtle mind. Sometimes one feels that the intellectual faculty of Noor Jahan was far more superior than her physical build. Perhaps Jahangir was attracted more by her mental subtleties.

1. *Iqbal Nama,* p. 56.
2. J. T. Wheeler, p. 142.

Noor Jahan was an educated lady who had received instruction in all the prevalent sciences. She had refind taste for poetry. Elphinstone[3] says, "One of the accomplishments by which she captivated Jahangir is said to have been her facility in composing extempore verses. She was equally interested in art and architecture. As we have discussed in this book, she proved herself a befitting companion to the Emperor in every way. She could share his tastes in art, architecture and literature.

Management of the Royal Household. Noor Jahan's entry in the Royal harem was a blessing in disguise. She seems to have transformed the management of the Royal household by inventing new styles of decoration. Her interest in gardening[4] positively improved the set-up of the gardens attached to the palaces. She had the knack of managing everything in such a way that better results were effected at comparatively less expenses. Khawafi Khan has narrated an interesting story displaying her thrifty nature. Once the royal elephants[5] were being displayed before the Emperor. All the animals were decked with coverings of a very fine brocade. The Emperor was so much impressed by them that he inquired from Khan-i-Saman (the controller of establishments) about the cost of the coverings. "Your Majesty, I know nothing about it. They were prepared in the harem and Her Majesty the Empress has sent them to me." The Emperor now turned to Noor Jahan. The Empress smiled and said, "Your Majesty, I did not purchase any cloth for them. These coverings have been made by palace tailors from the bags in which letters and petitions of the mansabdars and nobles are received, spending practically nothing on them." The Emperor was immensely pleased on the information. This is one of the several instances where the Empress tried to improve the general tone of the palace management within the minimum expenses. She proved that it was the taste and mental resources which enhanced the magnificence of the Court and mere expenditure of money did not count. She introduced new styles of dresses. The Noor Mahali brocade, Itr-i-Jahangiri and many types of clothes and ornaments continued to be popular in decent Indian families for a very long time to come. Many fashions and modes of dresses and decorations, still popular

3. Elphinstone, ***History of India***, p. 544.
4. Mrs. Stuart, p. 205.
5. Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 270. See also Elphinstone, p. 544.

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3. Elphinstone, *History of India*, p. 544.
4. Mrs. Stuart, p. 205.
5. Khawafi Khan, Vol. I, p. 270. See also Elphinstone, p. 544.

among the old families of Delhi and Hyderabad, Lucknow and other cities of Northern India, owe their origin to Noor Jahan. They were further developed by the succeeding generations. These Mughal fashions and modes of etiquette may still be witnessed in families of noble origin, migrating from Delhi, Lucknow, Agra and other cities of U.P. to Pakistan and settled at Karachi and Lahore.

Noor Jahan was not only expert in household management and the invention of fancy goods, but had learnt to wield arms also. She successfully participated in hunting expeditions. Her behaviour at the battle of Jhelum reveals her martial qualities. How daringly she sat in the howdah of her elephant, goading the animal into the rushing waters of the river. She exhorted the nobles to rise for liberating the Emperor and taunted her brother for lethargy and carelessness.

It is only rare that a lady of such character and qualities appears in history. It was this remarkable woman who made Jahangir depend entirely on her. Both Indian and foreign chroniclers refer to the extraordinary hold[6] of Noor Jahan over Jahangir. It was due to her superior qualities of head and heart that she could dazzle the Emperor to such an extent that he handed over to her the management of his personal as well as State affairs.

In the Orient she was the first Empress whose name appeared on the coinage along with the name of the Emperor. Not even the greatQ ueen Zubaida of the Abbasid Caliph Harun-ur-Rashid of Baghdad could boast of that honour.

In fact, Noor Jahan was an equal partner in the greatness of the Mughal Emperor Nooruddin Jahangir. No other woman had ever enjoyed this status. It means that Noor Jahan was a woman of superb ability and dazzling personality. She was an object of pride and progress not only for the members of her family, but also for the slaves and servants of this fortunate house. One would readily agree with Motamid Khan[7] in quoting the following Persian verse after discussing her character :

کنند خویش و تبار تو ناز و می زیبد
بحسن یک تن اگر صد قبیله ناز کند

6. For example, Bernier refers to it, *vide Travels*, p. ; *Iqbal Name*, p. 57:
"رفته رفته کار بجائی کشید که از بادشاهی بجز نامی نماند - مکرر می فرمودند که من سلطنت را بنور جهان بیگم ارزانی داشتم بجز یک سیر شراب و نیم سیر گوشت مرا هیچ در نمی باید -"

7. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 56.

The Influence of Noor Jahan on Jahangir. Historians agree that Noor Jahan exerted a very healthy influence on the ways of the Emperor. His habits improved. He ceased to be a cruel and tyrant person as we sometimes find him before his marriage with Noor Jahan. His weakness for wine was controlled, gradually bringing the quantity to a minimum. He would take wine only at night, while maintaining his sobriety in the day time.

In short, Noor Jahan proved herself a boon for the Emperor and the Empire. Hundreds of orphans and widows, travellers and students were benefited by her bounty. It is the charm of their personality that the Emperor and the Empress are respected and revered throughout the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent as just and benevolent, whose untiring energies were always at the beck and call of their subjects. In Lahore their tombs are a very popular resort of the people. The people pay visit to their graves with sincere devotion and strong affection. The names of these two companions will shine on the firmament of the Indian history for all time to come, inspiring the future generations, especially the womenfolk of Pakistan and India, to display the vigour and strength of character in serving their families and country. Noor Jahan's life is no doubt a lighthouse for them.

Chapter 23

NOOR JAHAN'S DESCENDANTS

Noor Jahan had a son[1] and a daughter (Ladli Begum) from her first husband, Sher Afgan. Nothing is on record about the son, but the daughter became a well-known historical figure on account of her marriage with Prince Shahriyar. She gave birth to a daughter.[2]

After the death of Jahangir and the murder of Shahriyar, Noor Jahan lived a retired life in the city of Lahore, which we have already discussed in another chapter. It appears that both Ladli and her daughter lived with Noor Jahan at Lahore. Although no authority enlightens us about their lives, yet we can safely conjecture that Ladli's daughter, who was approximately about twenty years old on the eve of her grandmother's death, was married to some Mughal gentleman, and spent her life in Lahore.

Amar Nath Akbari, the historian of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (d. 1839) mentions[3] a Mughal scholar, sage and poet, Mirza Akram Beg, who was one of his teachers. This scholar lived a retired literary life in Wazir Khan's mosque Noor Ahmad Chishti[4] also mentions Akram Beg and his son Mirza Azam Beg, who was given a post in the Provincial Civil Service by the British immediately after the annexation of the Punjab in 1849. Amar Nath says that Mirza Akram Beg was "نواسه زاد جنت مکانی" (a descendant of the daughter's son of Jahangir).[5] "Jannat Makani" was the title used for Jahangir in State papers and official histories after his death. He used to celebrate "Urs" (عرس), i.e. death anniversary, of Jahangir

1. De Laet, p. 180; *Maathir* Vol. II, p. 625.
2. *Iqbal Nama*, p. 263.
3. *Zafar Nama*, p. 104.
4. *Tahqiqat-e-Chishti*, 1964 Edition, pp. 1264-5.
5. If Mirza Akram Beg was a descendant of Ladli Begum's daughter, he was نواسه زاد نور جهان and not Jahangir. But out of respect for the memory of the Emperor he preferred to be called نواسه زاد جنت مکانی.

every year. In the Sikh period and the early British period, they used to get some State financial help for the "Urs". I feel that Mirza Akram Beg was a descendant of Ladli's daughter. The practice of celebrating Jahangir's "Urs" continued even up to the British period.

APPENDIX

NOTES ON PLATES

Plate No 1. Tomb of Itimadud Daulah at Agra. It was constructed by Noor Jahan. The design was prepared by Noor Jahan herself. It is a structure of white marble with fine pietra-dura work on it.

Plate No 2. Jahangir's mausoleum at Lahore. It was started in 1628 and completed in 1638. Perhaps at the advice of Asaf Khan, Shah Jahan followed the style of Itimadud Daulah's tomb while preparing its plan. Jahangir's mausoleum is a bigger structure, and its minarets are loftier than those of Itimadud Daulah's tomb. The sarcophagus on the roof of Jahangir's mausoleum is now missing.

Plate No. 3. Noor Jahan's tomb. It was constructed by the Empress herself between 1641 and 1645. The Empress followed the plan of the tombs of her father and husband. In the period of chaos that followed the decay of the Provincial Mughal Government of Lahore after 1753, the tomb suffered immensely. The outer stone covering of the facade, the four corner towers and the structure in the middle of the roof disappeared. The present structure was renovated many a time during the British period. At present it is also under extensive repairs.

Plate No. 4. Bibi Pari's tomb at Lal Bagh Fort, Dacca. Bibi Pari (Fair Lady) was the title of Shaista Khan's daughter, who was betrothed to Prince Azam, son of the Emperor Aurangzeb. She died before her marriage in 1685 at Dacca, when her father was the Governor of Bengal. Shaista Khan was the son of Asaf Khan. The same style is followed in the structure of Pari Bibi's tomb.

It is one type of the tomb style that developed in Mughal India. Besides these tombs some other tombs were also constructed according to this style.

The other style of the tomb architecture of Mughal India is represented by Humayun's tomb (Dehli), Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan's tomb (Dehli), Taj Mahal (Agra), Rabia Daurani's tomb

(Aurangabad, Deccan).

Plate No. 5. The marble sarcophagus of Jahangir's grave with floral work and Arabic writings in pietra-dura work.

Plate No. 6. The marble sarcophagus of Asaf Khan's grave with Arabic writings and floral work in pietra-dura work.

Plate No. 7. The present condition of the sarcophagi of the graves of Noor Jahan and her daughter Ladli Begum. This structure was constructed by Hakim Ajmal Khan. It is conjectured that the original sarcophagi were constructed after the style of the sarcophagi of Jahangir and Asaf Khan.

Plate No. 8. The *gulkari* or multicoloured painting on the ceiling of a part of the second gallery of Noor Jahan's tomb. Different geometrical designs with flowers in the centre are represented here.

Plate No. 9. The floral decoration in multicolours on an arch of Noor Jahan's tomb.

Plate No. 10. The entrance gate of Jahangir's mausoleum.

Plate No. 11. The gateway of Asaf Khan's tomb. The demolished gateway of Noor Jahan's tomb seems to have been made according to the style of these gates.

The gateway of Jahangir's tomb is a splendid structure with stone work on the facade and four pinnacles over it. The gateway of Asaf Khan is a simple structure of stone and mortar. Basically both of them follow a similar plan.

Plate No. 12. Another view of Noor Jahan's tomb.

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